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Christianity snubbed and insulted at U.N. meeting of world religious leaders

NEW YORK, N.Y. (EP) — A recent summit of world religious leaders at the United Nations to discuss world peace has instead caused more controversy.

Over 1,000 religious leaders representing 70 of the world's religions gathered at the U.N. General Assembly hall Aug. 28-31 for meetings designed to promote peace between religious groups. The group also established a permanent advisory council of religious leaders to the U.N., designed to help prevent and solve religious disputes.

Controversy started before the meeting began, mainly due to the absence of the Dalai Lama, spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhists and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize. Organizers of the summit reportedly did not initially invite the Dalai Lama because of a request from U.N. advisors and pressure from Chinese delegates. After public outcry, the Lama was invited to attend the final two days of the summit; he declined that offer. When Tibetan representatives read a prepared statement to the assembly on his behalf, delegates from China walked out of the room. The Chinese government accuses the Dalai Lama of creating unrest in the small country that was taken over by the communist government of China in 1959. The Lama is currently exiled from Tibet.

Evangelicals excluded

Another noticeable snub was the exclusion of evangelical Christian groups from the meeting. Representatives from major Protestant denominations were not

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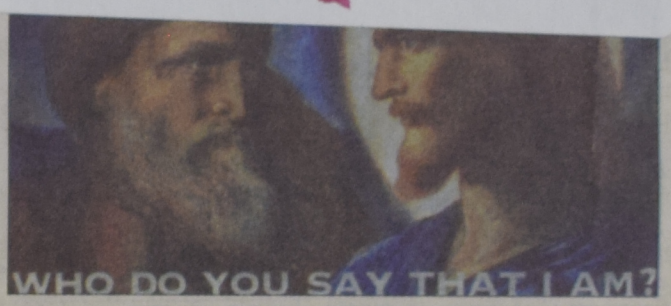

CHRIST AND PETER (C.A. 1896), BY SIMEON SOLOMON. COLLECTION OF DENNIS T. LANIGAN

Anno Domini: Jesus Through the Centuries *is a landmark exhibition at the Provincial Museum of Alberta in Edmonton that explores the identity of Jesus and how he has altered the course of Western civilization over the past 2000 years.*

Ontario's new employment standards proposals criticized

Alan Doerksen

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — Ontario's Ministry of Labor is planning some major changes to the province's Employment Standards Act, including scrapping the One Day's Rest in Seven Act. The Canadian Christian Business Federation (CCBF) and the Christian Labour Association of Canada (CLAC) both see the legislation as taking a practical approach, but they criticize plans to change the rules about vacation time and taking a weekly day of rest.

Attracting investment

When the government's consultation paper was released in late summer, Ontario Labor Minister Chris Stockwell explained, "Modernizing this important workplace law will help Ontario businesses become more productive and competitive, and attract jobs, investment and growth to Ontario.... Today, we are keeping our election promise to increase flexibility for employees and employers." In August and September, the government conducted province-wide consultations on these proposed changes, and both CCBF and CLAC expressed their views to the government.

One area that concerned both

CC FILES

Hans Vander Stoep, executive director of CCBF.

agencies is the government's plan to scrap the One Day's Rest in Seven Act. This act provides that hotels, restaurants and cafes must allow their employees at least 24 consecutive hours of rest every seven days, wherever possible on a Sunday. As an alternative, the labor ministry wants to allow for a weekly rest period of 24 consecutive hours in every seven days or 48 consecutive hours in every 14 days.

CCBF has responded to this idea by stating: "This, of course, flies directly in the face of all that Christians believe and hold sacred. The fight for recognition of Sunday as a day of rest was in principle lost years ago. Still we'd all be well served if we studied the impact of that decision and what it has done for the quality of life."

Protect weekly day of rest

In its submission to the government, CLAC stated: "Modernizing the Act requires protection for the religious practices and observances for people of different faiths, and must ensure that a weekly day of rest is meaningfully protected.... Not enough is done to protect those who wish a religious day other than Sundays, or to provide effective protection for those who wish to exercise their right to observe their religious day of the week.

"The current provisions allow that an employee can accept an assignment of work and 'then refuse the assignment only upon giving the employer notice at least 48 hours before the first hour of work on that day.' In practice, worker availability is a crucial hiring determinant, particularly for part-time retail employees, and many employees simply never get the opportunity to be hired if they wish to maintain a weekly day of religious observance. In order to take advantage of the protections outlined in the legislation, it is practically necessary for employees to mislead their employer in the hiring process, a practice that goes against the religious practices which the legislation is designed to protect.... An abundance of anecdotal evidence (we are not aware of formal studies) exists to demonstrate that the current protections do not work. We recommend ... the protection of religious observance days be reviewed."

CLAC's Hank Beekhuis, who helped present this submission, comments that the government sees weekly days of religious observance as "an impediment to business."

The government also wants to change the rules about vacation days. The ESA requires employers to schedule vacation in one- or two-week blocks. But the Labor Ministry argues that those provisions "have been criticized for not providing employers and employees with the flexibility to make vacation arrangements that reflect changing needs and situations. Many employees have said they would prefer to be able to schedule their vacation one or two days at a time, rather than in weekly blocks, to provide for paid time off to deal with personal matters. Employers can benefit from such arrangements since they are often less disruptive, particularly in smaller operations, where costs can be incurred in replacing employees who are off for more than a few days at a time." Therefore, the government suggests this change to the ESA: "At the written request of the employee, an employer and employee could agree to schedule vacation in daily increments."

Purpose of holidays defeated

But Hans Vander Stoep, executive director of CCBF, contends that taking holidays one day at a time "defeats the purpose of holidays." CCBF's submission states: "This appears at first glance to be a noble attempt at accommodating family obligations. In reality this negates the whole reason for holidays. As one of CCBF's members put it, 'I insist that my employees take holidays two weeks at a time. They need the first week to get work out of their system, and the second to enjoy their holiday.' Isn't that the whole point of holidays? To have

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News

Turner's critique of Christianity like 'nails on a chalkboard'

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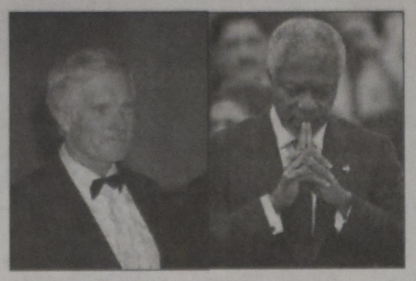
invited to the summit, nor were representatives from evangelical groups, such as the National Association of Evangelicals, asked to attend. Even the Southern Baptist Convention, the largest Protestant denomination in the U.S., did not receive an invitation. A spokesperson for the denomination told CNS News that "it does not appear that the agenda of the Gospel is important" to the groups that organized the meeting.

Rev. Dr. Hans Ucko, representative to the summit from the World Council of Churches, said the meeting would have benefited from a broader constituency base that should have included more Christians.

Turner calls for new world religion

If Protestant Christians had been invited, they probably wouldn't have enjoyed the floorshow. Ted Turner, honorary chairman and primary financier of the summit, took the opportunity



Ted Turner (l.) called for religious tolerance but criticized Christianity. U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan asked religious leaders "to set an example of interfaith dialogue and co-operation."

of his keynote address to criticize Christianity.

Turner described to the delegates his desire to become a pastor and Christian missionary when he was a child, but said that upon further study he later decided that his Christian upbringing was wrong. "What disturbed me is that my religious Christian sect was very intolerant,'' Turner said. "We thought that we were the only ones going to heaven…It just confused the devil out of me because I said heaven is going to be a mighty empty place with nobody else there. So I was pretty confused and turned off by it." The billionaire also called for the establishment of a new world religion based on New Age principles.

Ironically, during the rest of the speech Turner implored the assembly to stand up for religious tolerance (as well as nuclear disarmament). Turner gave his remarks after U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan asked religious leaders "to set an example of interfaith dialogue and cooperation."

This is not the first time Turner has publicly spoken against Christianity. In an interview with the *Dallas Morning News*, Turner said that Christianity is "a religion for losers" and "I don't want anybody to die for me."

"Listening to Ted Turner criticizing Christianity was like listening to nails on a chalkboard," said Darren Logan, a policy analyst at the Family Research Council who attended the summit. "Mr. Turner supposedly wanted to sponsor this summit to pursue global goals of 'peace' and 'tolerance,' but then used the podium as a soapbox to malign Christian teaching. How does Mr. Turner expect to strengthen religious tolerance when he is criticizing the tenets of one of the major world religions?"

Summit more interested in liberal causes than peace

Christian leaders questioned what the meeting of leaders would achieve. According to Bawa Jain, secretary-general of the summit, organizers hoped to "build a global network of support for the work of the United Nations." "Tolerance" and "interfaith cooperation" were buzzwords also tossed around in media reports, but Christian groups charge that the leadership of the summit is more interested in liberal causes than world peace.

"The so-called Peace Summit in New York in the United States this week is nothing more than another attempt by another international bureaucracy to undermine the faith and culture of Christians," said Father Matthew Habiger, president of Human Life International, the world's largest pro-life, pro-faith, pro-family group.

The summit was organized in part by the United Religions Initiative, a group that reportedly favors population control, abortion and same-sex marriage. While not officially organized by the UN, the summit was financed by several international funds tied to the U.N. (including Turner's Better World Foundation) that have financed causes encouraging abortion rights, acceptance of homosexuality and sex-education worldwide.

"Some representatives voiced concern over the agenda of the summit and its purpose. More specifically, delegates questioned why a number of Christian groups…had not been invited, and what were the intentions of the funders," said Jonathan Gallagher, United Nations liaison director for the Seventh-day Adventist Church. "Other concerns centered on what role would be played by the proposed International Advisory Council of Religious and Spiritual Leaders. Any attempt to work towards a kind of 'unified world religion' or single religious voice — as some are proposing — would be doomed to failure."

Robert Maginnis, vice-president of foreign policy for the Family Research Council told *Charisma* magazine the meeting was "a wolf in sheep's clothing, cloaking anti-life, anti-family politics in the robes of religion."

Religious relativism was also a main theme expressed by several religious leaders attending the conference. Anne Graham Lotz, daughter of evangelist Billy Graham, told the assembled leaders during her speech that Jesus was the only true way to heaven. A Buddhist priest then countered her statement saying, "Every river leads to the ocean and every religion leads to God."

This vague, relativistic ideal was repeated by other leaders at the summit. "The spirit loves diversity," said Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, a Hindu teacher quoted by the Ba'hai World News Service. "The time has come to love each other's religions as one's own." This sentiment was also favored by Turner who said, "We are all one race, and there is only one God who manifests himself in different ways."

Impact remains to be seen

The actual impact of the summit on the world's religions remains to be seen. One outcome was the Commitment to Global Peace, a document written before the summit began, which was amended and signed by the attending leaders. The document asks the religious people of the world "to co-operate in building peaceful societies, to seek mutual understanding through dialogue where there are differences, to refrain from violence, to practice compassion and to uphold the dignity of all life."

Another outcome was an effort by Hindu, Buddhist, Jain and Sikh delegations to add a resolution to the United Nations declaration of human rights, passed by the assembly in 1948, that would demand a better clarification on religious conversions. The delegates asked the U.N. to clarify the statement: "everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance." The delegates say Christian missionaries are misinterpreting this passage to favor "unhindered conversions" and "proselytizing" in India. The delegates drafted their own resolution condemning what they consider organized proselytism which they say "has a long history of creating tension and conflicts between religious communities and which continue to impair inter-faith goodwill, tolerance and harmony."

Government needs better vacation guidelines, say business, labor agencies

... continued from page 1
employees refresh, recharge, revitalize? Giving them time off to meet family obligations is not a holiday at all.... Neither employee nor employer benefits from this exercise. Industry together with government needs to be more creative in coming to grips with this new phenomenon, responsibility for elderly parents or still-at-home children and increasingly demanding work obligations."

Consequences to self and society

Taking a similar view, CLAC comments: "Taking vacation by the day clearly responds to the desire of many workers who would welcome this measure. We fear that this may result, however, in some employees using all of their vacation to take care of personal and business needs, and never really achieving any sustained break from work. The consequences, not only to the individual, but also to co-workers and society when workers do not have any vacation are well-documented. Perhaps the compromise is requiring one week to be taken as a block and allowing the remainder to be taken in daily increments."

Another key change the government wants to make is to add a new family leave

COURTESY CLAC

CLAC's Hank Beekhuis

entitlement, which would provide employees, in workplaces with 50 or more workers, with up to 10 days of unpaid, job-protected leave per year to deal with a family crisis, personal or family illness or bereavement situation.

Flexibility needed

Employers need to be flexible about family leave, asserts Vander Stoep. For instance, a family might have to help an elderly parent get settled into a seniors' home "without having to worry about, 'Will my job be there when I come back?'" There is no need for paid family leave, Vander Stoep argues.

"We heartily support the focus on providing protection for workers who face challenges juggling their family and work commitments, and welcome legislated provisions for family-crisis leave," CLAC states in its submission. "The question is: 'Why does this have to be restricted to workplaces with 50 or more employees?'" Currently, "it's a no-cost issue," comments Beekhuis. "The payment may come later."

One other objection CCBF has to the government proposals is: "Once law, this legislation will permit a maximum of sixty hours per week. While this may be reality, it is not quality life. This means either six ten-hour, or five twelve-hour days. It could even be more since the overtime can be averaged over three week periods."

Generally, says Vander Stoep, the proposed changes take a "fairly realistic" approach, and are "meeting situations that exist now." But he notes that these consultations followed "a typical Harris government approach: do things in summer." In summer, many people are on vacation, so the government will probably get little feedback and will be able to easily pass the new legislation.

Beekhuis observes, "I think the government's biggest concern is how business will react."

News/Politics

Canadian bishops appeal for ratification of convention on migrant workers

TORONTO, (ZENIT.org) — The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB) has addressed a letter to Lloyd Axworthy, Foreign Affairs Minister, on the situation of migrant workers and their families.

In the letter, signed by Archbishop James Weisgerber of Winnipeg, chairman of the Bishops' Commission for Social Affairs, the bishops state that they are taking the initiative given the situation of the International Convention on Protection of the Rights of Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, which was adopted and open for signing, ratification, and adhesion by the U.N. General Assembly in December of 1990. "To date, Canada has declined to sign and ratify this international instrument, which could provide much of the needed protection for the estimated 75 to 80 million migrant workers in the world today."

"The international economy, encouraged by free trade policies of governments such as Canada's, is tearing down barriers to globalized commerce with increasing frequency. Fast-paced market globalization needs regulation, for without it human values can easily be overlooked. History has shown this to be especially true in the case of migrants, who often are forced to labor in the worst conditions that exist in their arrival country," the letter continues.

Environmental refugees

The letter also addresses the problem of "environmental refugees," defined by some researchers and United Nations officers as "anyone whose environment has become so hostile or unsustainable that they can no longer remain in their home, community, or homeland, and to which they may never be able to return." Depending on definitions used, the letter continues, "there may be even more persons displaced by environmental crises, natural and man-made disasters than there are refugees from political and civil strife. In so many cases, the levels of human suffering are enormous among migrants who do not choose to, but must, relocate."

The episcopal letters states that, "Recognizing these dilemmas as long ago as 1971, Pope Paul VI wrote of 'the urgent need to be able to advance beyond a strictly nationalistic attitude in regard to migrant workers in order to create a statute that would recognize their right to emigrate, would foster their incorporation, make their professional development easier, and give them access to decent housing where they could reunite their families.'"

Defending human right to migrate

The message recalls that, "While defending the human right to migrate, the Church does not encourage its exercise. Speaking in 1990 in favor of the Draft Convention, the representative of the Holy See to the United Nations also noted that 'it would seem equally important to insist on the right to migrate, to be given adequate opportunities to earn a decent living and to raise a family in dignity in the country of one's birth.'"

At the same time, the message adds, "it is a matter of crucial moral, social, and economic importance to defend and strengthen the rights of people involved in the migratory process. We believe that the International Convention on the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families improves some existing protections and definitely deserves Canada's firm support."

Archbishop Weisgerber states that the bishops "join several ecumenical coalitions, such as the Inter-Church Committee for Refugees, the Canada-Asia Working Group, and the Canadian Ecumenical Jubilee Initiative, in requesting" the Minister's "thoughtful consideration of the positive implications of Canadian ratification of this international instrument. We are convinced that Canadian leadership in this matter would be a welcome signal of hope, not only for the migrants who come to our shores, but also for the great majority who find themselves in situations of extreme difficulty in many other states around the globe."

MIKE PINDER

Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy

Canada should adopt fixed election dates

Principalities & Powers

David T. Koyzis

Speculation has been going on for months as to the timing of the next federal election. The *Constitution Act, 1982*, mandates a five-year maximum time limit between elections. Within that range, it is up to the Prime Minister and his cabinet to decide when an election call will come. A number of considerations enter into this decision, but especially the popularity of the ruling party and its leaders.

Discard archaic, self-serving method

It is time for Canada to consider discarding this archaic and self-serving method of timing elections and to adopt something close to fixed election dates instead. Our current political system already places too much power in the hands of the Prime Minister and cabinet. Why should we leave it up to them to decide when they should next seek the verdict of the citizens on their performance? It's rather like students springing a pop-quiz on themselves!

Next month our southern neighbors will be going to the polls to elect a president and vice-president, 435 Representatives, approximately 33 Senators, and countless state and local officials. Everyone has known for ages that the 2000 election would take place on the first Tuesday after the first Monday of next month, that is, November 7. If one had a powerful enough calendar in one's computer, one could just as easily predict the date of the U.S. election of 2100.

Timing of election a conflict of interest

The point is, whether or not a President is popular, he cannot manipulate the timing of an election for his own benefit. If he were to try to do so, Americans would be up in arms at what they would properly see as a flagrant abuse of power. Yet we Canadians, with our longstanding reputation for political docility, tolerate what is rather obviously a conflict of interest.

But, some might say, Canada's system of government is different from that of the U.S. True enough. For good historical reasons related to the balance of power between King and Parliament, Westminster-style parliamentary democracies do not allow the monarch or her representative freely to dissolve Parliament at her own whim. This power has by default come into the hands of her Prime Minister as head of government.

Despite my American birth, I am not usually one to suggest that Canadians ape all things American. Yet there are numerous parliamentary systems that function quite nicely with fixed election dates. For example, like their American counterparts, German voters go to the polls every four years, with some exceptions. We would do well to adopt the example of many other western democracies and institute stable, if not rigidly fixed, election dates. How might we do so?

Although a constitutional amendment would certainly do the job, ordinary federal legislation is more feasible. Parliament could choose a date four years from the last election, with some needed flexibility built in. In the event of a government's defeat in the House of Commons – by now a rare event last occurring in 1979 – Parliament would, of course, have to be dissolved and an election held, irrespective of the amount of time from the previous poll. But at that point the calendar would be reset and future elections calculated from the date of the new one. It would thus not be possible to predict the dates of an election at the end of the coming century, although one could likely do so at least for the coming decade.

Such a reform would keep our system more flexible than the American, while eliminating the current self-serving character of our present arrangement. It might also help to restore public confidence in Canada's beleaguered democratic institutions.

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Editorial

Let the games begin!

Harry der Nederlanden

If you've watch any T.V. at all or read a newspaper or news magazine over the past couple of weeks, you couldn't help but be aware of the Olympic Games being held in Sydney, Australia. Notice how that came out? As if normally this sports hoopla is beneath my notice: as if it has to be thrust upon me to merit my notice.

Actually, the first thing I did when I came home those evenings when the Olympics were on is to flick on the T.V. to find out what was happening in those multi-million dollar stadiums "down under". The drama of such competitions is an irresistible lure to me, especially the long distance and endurance events. As I watch, I cannot help but reflect on how long and hard these athletes had to practice to become so good, and how much is riding on their shoulders.

Some of them are very young shoulders, too. I'm thinking here of women's gymnastics. To add to the drama, the channel I was watching also showed film about the lives of some of the girls performing floor exercises. The film showed Chinese coaches working with children who looked like kindergartners; the youngsters were put through some very rigorous, even painful flexibility tests. The girl who was featured had been taken from her family home when she was still in grade school to be raised by coaches, seeing her parents only twice a year. In the years leading up to the Olympics, she practised 7 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Every single athlete who made it to the Olympics (and many hundreds more who didn't) knows the meaning of discipline and sacrifice. To get there, to excel, each followed a rigorous work schedule that made it necessary to say No to many of the things that make life enjoyable to most other kids. At an early age, they chose – or were steered into – a narrowly focused life, a life of self-denial once associated primarily with the monastery. The story of the Chinese girl is perhaps an extreme example. In the West, the family usually remains closely involved with the budding young athlete. But it's the discipline imposed by the coach that rules the child's life.

I suppose here I'm expected to moralize about the fanatical dedication the Goddess of Sport is able to inspire in parents and children and contrast it to the lack of enthusiasm for things religious.

Universal appeal of self-denial and sacrifice

That's true, but I was more struck by the universal appeal of such self-denial and sacrifice. All over the globe people from almost every kind of culture followed the success or failure of their athletes. The Olympic arena is designed to make the performance visible to billions of viewers all around the world. I'm not just thinking here of the stadium and the seats, for the electronic extensions — the fibre-optic cables and the satellite connections — are just as much part of the arena as the stadium seats. No expense is spared to make the feats of these athletes seen – seen to be admired and emulated.

So behind every athlete there are not just thousands of would-be's, kids who gave their all but didn't make it; there are also millions of wanna-be's, kids who identify with the winners and dream of one day themselves shining like stars in the Olympic firmament. Just think all that desire, all that dreaming, all that energy – fixed on a *game*.

What's a game?

And what's a game? A constellation of rules that create a very delimited space that allows a very delimited talent to be tested. A 100-metre dash is little more than a starting line, a finishing line, and a "Get ready ... get set ... go!" Between those lines one athlete after another has risen to world fame. Or fallen flat on his face. He or she devoted all to a competition that has no purpose beyond itself, a competition created out of thin air by a few rules.

Imagine the first bunch of guys who began competing to see who was best at getting the ball into an old bushel basket tacked to a beam in the barn. Can't you see the farmer popping in to see what the ruckus is all about, and then trudging to the house shaking his head to tell his wife about the silly waste of energy expended by kids nowadays? "If they've got that much energy to spare," she says, "tell them to chop some wood and bring it into the kitchen."

So much energy spent on such foolishness! Nope, I won't follow that moralizing route either.

What is it about this bundle of traits that makes the winner of a game – exceptional dedication, self-denial and devotion to a narrowly defined set of skills — that gives them such universal appeal?

Yes, you're right, it's a big business. There's fortune as well as fame involved. Even some genuine patriotism. But those aren't the deepest impulses that make kids strive to become faster, higher, stronger. And that make the rest of us watch, straining along in our seats.

Surplus energy, says my farmer. That sounds likely. Games seem to spring up out of something left over after we've done the serious drudgery of work. Those guys in the barn — aren't they just blowing off steam? But how does this lead to a life of practice, discipline and self-denial?

Working hard at play

Is it because life itself, that is, human culture and civilization, is rooted in discipline and self-denial? Maybe that doesn't strike you as self-evident. Doesn't culture arise out of surplus time and wealth? The question presupposes that it's easy to tell the difference between what is necessary and what is surplus, what is work and what is play. Few, however, work as hard at their work as the Olympic athlete works at her play.

Renunciations and affirmations

At the basis of every culture, there's a renunciation of some things and an affirmation of others. For a culture to flourish, people must embrace a certain self-discipline, an asceticism, if you will. A significant segment must dedicate itself to a certain bundle of values, and that becomes a way of life. These values in turn enable some to stand out and to stand for something – to become a hero, the living embodiment of a good. Dedication, discipline and sacrifice are understood and admired by almost all peoples. Even the so-called masters of suspicion, Freud, Marx and Nietzsche, saw this: some things need to be suppressed that others may flourish. They, of course, disagreed profoundly with the contemporary advocates of discipline about what values merit our dedication.

But all our hearts are touched by sacrifice and dedication – a life transformed into a torch.

A life transformed into a torch

A life transformed into a torch! That happens in a different way to those who are not heros but martyrs. That's the shadow side of our admiration for sacrifice: at the root of all culture there is religion, and after the Fall all religion is rooted in sacrifice. In our heart of hearts we all believe that those good gifts that are part of our culture, our way of life, are merited by the sacrifices we make, by our self-denial and our self-discipline. It is these that enable us – our race, our culture, our way of life – to excel over others.

So those who say that competition and sacrifice and discipline are part of life are right. This truth is exemplified in the Olympic games.

The violent motivating impulse of culture

Jesus, the Lamb of God, also saw that this is an essential part of human life; he saw that it puts human life on a violent footing. If we feel we must sacrifice ourselves or part of this good creation to please the gods and win their blessing, this makes it easier to sacrifice others as well. By sacrificing himself, Jesus, the Son of God, exposed this violence at the heart of our will to excellence. Not that we might continue admiring sacrifice as the way to the good and to God. But to remove it as the mainspring of life.

Because his sacrifice stands between us and God, the Author of all good, the central motivating impulse of culture is transformed. It is no longer violent. The way to excel is no longer by beating someone else to the finish line, by nudging the old hero off the platform, by usurping his godlike status.

Now, as Paul points out, the ordinary lives of ordinary folk, who accept the Crucified One as their Beginning and End, are living sacrifices, wholly pleasing to God. They are so, not because they overshadow and outshine the lives around them, but because their source is beyond the finish line. Not the anxiety of competition, but gratitude; not the other's defeat, but the other's good; not renunciation, but God's cosmic Yes spurs them on.

Then we say, "Let the games begin!" For they are bracketed by that Yes: it is Yes at the starting line and Yes at the finish line. Yes and Amen!

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Letters

Montreal's Ministry to Seafarers continues 'word and deed' ministry

Thanks to Rev. Hans Uittenbosch for his review of 35 years of ministry to seafarers which appeared in the Christian Courier on September 4, 2000.

We here at the Ministry to Seafarers in Montreal continue that work with our daily ministry of word and deed. The situation faced daily by seafarers as described by Luke in Acts 27 and 28 is as real today as it was then. All seafarers, despite the wonders of modern technology are still at the mercy of the elements.

Seafarers face serious problems

But seafarers today face other dangers than the weather. Many face long periods of separation from their homes and families. Even with modern communication devices, loneliness is a real problem. Seafarers find a place of refuge and safety with the welcoming hospitality offered at ours and other seamen's clubs.

Modern technology on board ship allows ship owners the opportunity to capitalize on a fast turn-around in harbor. Stays are shortened to the point of most ships being in port only a matter of hours or a day or two. This severely limits their opportunity for shore leave. Many, due to their work schedules, even in port, are unable to leave their ships at all. More than 75 per cent of the ships that enter the Port of Montreal, stay two days or less.

Modern technology has increased the stress level on the officers. One would think that computers have reduced work, but that is not what the officers tell us. Because for the owner, time is money, we have found that ships load and unload very quickly. We find very few ships in harbor over weekends. The exception is cruise ships, but that is only very seasonal in Montreal. Simply put, ships are bigger, crews are smaller, and stays are shorter than was the case even five years ago.

Most work on board ships

So as the shipping industry changes, so must the ministry. Though the Seafarers Centre remains open, most of the work of our two chaplains occurs on board ship. We try to visit every ship in port at least once during their stay.

In the Port of Montreal, we have joined

COURTESY LLOYD BURGHART

The Montreal Ministry to Seafarers' current headquarters.

with the Apostleship of the Sea (Roman Catholic) and the Mission to Seafarers (Anglican) in a joint pastoral ministry to seafarers. All three chaplaincies focus their work on ship visits.

Because of the these changes, the Board of Seaway Ministry has decided to move our base of operation back to Mariner's House in the Spring of 2001. This will mean that there will be a single seafarer's club WITH A NEW NAME in the port which will be well equipped to handle the number of seafarers who can visit the club. However, the work of our CRC Chaplain and assistants will be supervised exclusively by the Board of Seaway Ministry. None of our personnel will be employed by the Mariner's House.

The newly renovated facility will offer a visible chapel and "quiet" lounge on the same floor as the main centre. It will be separated from the "noisy" lounge by a glass wall. All of the chaplains will work from this centre, with the plans to have one chaplain on duty each evening. The remaining chaplains will be freed to visits seafarers on board their ships.

In the task of the Ministry to Seafarers, the work of the chaplains and volunteers remains the same: to introduce men and women to Jesus Christ, to build them up in their faith (those who already know him), and to minister to all seafarers in their spiritual, physical, social, and justice needs as the opportunity presents itself. All of us in ministry need to be openly seeking out those opportunities.

We seek to continue to witness to Jesus Christ in the Port of Montreal on the foundation laid by the Rev. Hans Uittenbosch and built upon by the Rev. Michael Winnowski. We need your continued prayers and financial support.

The Rev. Lloyd Burghart is the current Harbour Chaplain at the ministry to Seafarers in Montreal.

Church should reflect glory of God's kingdom

Vicky Van Andel made some important observations in her letter "Should women be involved in deciding the women-in-office issue?" (21-8-2000). However much I agree with her, I wonder if the debate is not on the wrong track.

As far as I can determine the issue is not authority, submission, interpretation, etc., but the nature of the church. If the church is meant to reflect fallen human nature then those aspects may be relevant. But if the church should reflect something of God's new creation, his kingdom in all its glory, then the solution seems to be relatively simple.

Since Reformed people do not hold to an Islamic idea of eternity, Van Andel should never have had reason for her lament. That the nature of the church has nearly completely been ignored in the debate is a sad commentary on our theologians, ministers and everyone else who has spoken out on the topic.

Bert den Boggende
Brooks, Alta.

Why put down Graham?

We would very much like to learn why Mr. Hielema (Nose for News, August 21) felt the need to put down Dr. Billy Graham, a godly man beloved by millions around the planet, as "Old Billy himself (Himself)."

Celia and Frank DeVries
Nanaimo, B.C.

Good to laugh at ourselves

We have enjoyed the humor in CC lately. It made me turn to my Dutch books and re-read Okke Jager's *De Humor van de Bijbel* (The Humor of the Bible).

Please, let us have some humor from time to time, it's good to laugh at ourselves and laughing is good for our health.

Ria Wiersma
Trenton, Ont.

Universities: strategic places for Christians to be

Thank you for your editorial "Most Ideas Born and Nurtured in Universities" Sept. 4th. You are quite right about the alienation that scholarly jargon can cause with non-academics, and the analogy of Christian scholars as "spotters" can help people understand the dangers of engaging other worldviews (although seeing everyone who is "not us" as *the enemy* isn't quite accurate). Finally, I agree that there is a dire need for both contextualization and trust in that missionary endeavor.

I would like to broaden the subjects of the topic from "Christian scholars" to include students as well. Students in Christian colleges, and maybe more so those in public universities where dialogue with people who worship other gods can happen everyday. I think especially of Christian graduate students, who are exploring new academic territory, sometimes all on their own. And campus ministers, too. As you say, ideas change things: lives, communities, countries. It's a strategic place for Christians to be, and the bridge between these spotters and the home base needs to be kept open and busy.

Thanks.

Peter Schuurman
Brock Campus Ministries
Brock University
St. Catharines, Ont.

For a quick Letter to the Editor, please send it by fax to: (905) 682-8313, or by e-mail to: cceditor@aol.com

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Education

Christians encouraged to bolder expression on secular campuses

(Religion Today) — God went back to college this summer, two ministries to Christian professors at secular university campuses reported.

Atlanta-based Ravi Zacharias International Ministries and Christian Leadership Ministries, a division of Campus Crusade for Christ hosted "God and the Academy," an international symposium to address "the minefield of public faith on the campus." The conference, billed as "charting a course for the new millennium," drew 400 scholars to the Atlanta campus of the Georgia Institute of Technology for five days in late June.

Presentations covered anthropology to zoology and focused on eight major disciplines: engineering, business, science, communication, social sciences, agriculture, arts, and humanities. Speakers covered worldview analysis, ministry training, and professional development, three areas key to Christian academics on secular campuses. Lectures and workshops discussed the integration of faith and scholarship, research funding, "intelligent design" models of creation, tenure, First Amendment issues of free speech and exercise of religion, and how to teach absolutes in a post-modern world.

Among the best-known speakers were Philip Johnson of the University of California, Berkeley; Alister McGrath of Oxford University, Mark White of Georgia Tech, and Zacharias, an Indian-born Christian apologist and evangelist.

Christian faculty members are becoming more visible and vocal about their faith and how it relates to their work, organizers said. "At my school, the University of Georgia, many of the faculty are meeting with the students...once a week or after class," said Henry "Fritz" Schaefer, five-time Nobel Prize nominee in quantum chemistry. "It's very encouraging both to the students and to the professor."

Supreme Court to hear Trinity Western case in November

LANGLEY, B.C. — On November 9, Canada's highest court will hear a case concerning certification of Trinity Western University's teacher education program, which some legal experts and Canadian groups say will be pivotal in defining future religious freedoms and civil liberties for all Canadians. The appeal is being brought forward by the British Columbia College of Teachers (BCCT), which has twice been ordered by lower courts to accredit the fifth year of the university's teacher education program, reports TWU in a press release.

Pivotal principle at stake

"The pivotal principle at stake in this challenge is this: Will public regulatory bodies be permitted to deny certifications, professional licenses and other benefits on the basis of religious beliefs and to do so even without producing any evidence of intolerance or unacceptable behavior'?" says Guy Saffold, TWU's executive vice-president.

The November hearing in the Supreme Court will cap a legal dispute that has been in the courts for four years. Despite two lower court rulings that there is no evidence to support BCCT's case, BCCT's governing council has continued to deny approval based on disagreement with a university policy concerning homosexual behaviour — ignoring the reports of its own investigation teams which had concluded TWU's program deserved approval.

BCCT contends that TWU students who abide by a community standards agreement to refrain from extramarital sex while attending university, including pre-marital sex, adultery and homosexual behavior, might be biased against gay students in the public school classroom.

"BCCT has been able to cite only vague suspicions and stereotypical perceptions to justify its decisions," says Saffold. "Decisions based on stereotypes are anathema to our laws and amount to discrimination." The courts have so far upheld TWU's case. The B.C. Court of Appeal ruled that the BCCT has failed to produce even "one bit of evidence" of intolerance and that its actions, therefore, are "patently unreasonable."

"TWU has been training teachers for 13 years and our graduates teach in B.C. public schools with distinction," says Saffold, "Our teacher education students are taught to be compassionate, professional teachers who uphold the dignity and welfare of every student."

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Fresh perspective from a death on campus

Campus Culture

Peter Schuurman

Ironically, I often give my oral report to my church classis on what's happening at Brock University just before the chaplain from Shalom Manor retirement home gives his report. I'll describe my work of helping students carve out a future, and then he will follow with descriptions of helping people reconcile their pasts and inevitably, he will mention a number of funerals he's done. We cater to the opposite ends of the age spectrum, institutionally speaking. University ushers people into life, and retirement homes ease them on to the next one.

Big institutions bring thousands of people together while at the same time separating them from the rest of the population. While Brock bustles with people who celebrate the early years after puberty, they may never see, or talk to, someone who is celebrating the early years of retirement. "I never went off-campus last year," confessed one student to me last week.

A giant campus memorial service

This is the hall of graduations and dreams, not funerals and memories. That is why the memorial service last month for our Chancellor was such a powerful event. I was asked to help organize the service, and worked with the family and university staff to prepare a liturgy for 800 guests and local cable TV.

Robert S.K. Welch (1928-2000) served for 15 years as the Chancellor — the head of the university who is officially the only one with the power to grant degrees to graduating students. He was known as a gifted person, a warm human being, and a good man. Listening to the tributes from the podium, I was struck by a couple of things.

First of all, I was impressed by how diversely involved he was in his community. In an age of intense specialization, here was a person who had a legal career, did extended service in provincial politics, was deeply involved in his church and charity, and on top of it all had room left in his heart for the academic world — especially the students of Brock. One thing is for sure, he did not lead a compartmentalized life.

Resisting the mask of the bad

He did not do so at the expense of his family, either. His son, Robert Welch, who spoke on behalf of the family, said that "love of family and loyalty to one's friends meant more than anything to him." In this way his life was not only broad, but deep.

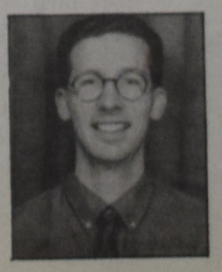
One of Mr. Welch's Anglican clergy friends gave a tribute as well. In it he mentioned that our Chancellor knew full well the dangers that come with institutions (he quoted Martin Buber "institutions are a mask for the bad.") Here Mr. Welch was, right in the middle of politics, academics, law, and religion — four huge institutions that run on a logic of their own often without regard for the needs of individuals — and he somehow never fell prey to their respective vices. "He knew the difference between the real and compromise," added the archdeacon.

He went on to say that Mr. Welch saw himself as a public servant — not in a high position to *be* somebody, but rather in a position to *do* something. "I am, therefore I serve," would have been his motto, said the archdeacon. His son explained further what was behind that character: "his values were that individuals matter, their opinions are important, and people should be listened to." That can be a hard style to live out when you're constrained by the rules of institutions. But he did it, with a twinkle in his eye.

What motivated him? He had great friends and a great family, some speakers said. He had a deep faith, and he gathered strength from that faith, said the university President. "A faith in the absolute, unconditional, never to be earned love of God," filled out the archdeacon. "He knew who he was because he knew *whose* he was."

Personally, I always saw him as the big little man that man glowed. Small in stature, but big in faith and cultural influence. I wanted him to adopt me as his honourary grandson so that I might inherit some of his fire and faith. His legacy will have to do.

Memorial services are powerful records that can stir and inspire us to be great people, and we don't get very many around the university. Robert Welch Jr. ended his address with the challenge such an event inevitably raises: "What will people remember about *you*?"



Peter Schuurman is the Christian Reformed campus chaplain at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ont.

Arts/Media

Alberta museum exhibition explores Jesus' influence on Western culture

Alan Doerksen

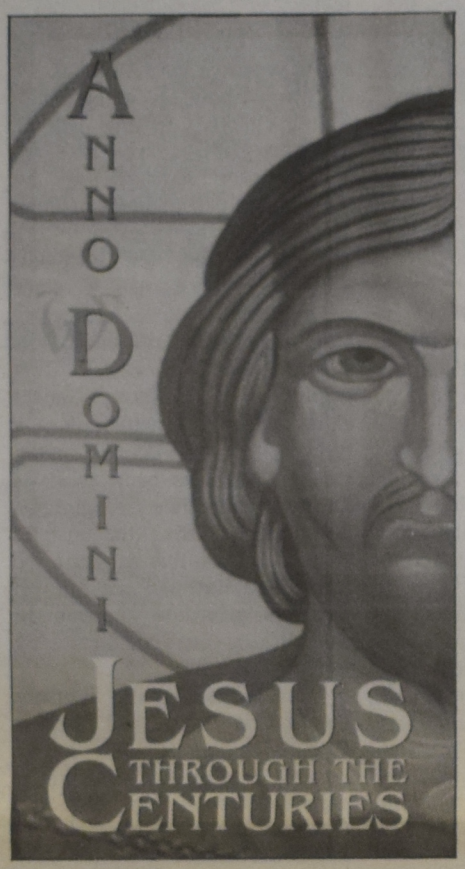
EDMONTON — The impact of Jesus and his teachings on people and ideas, on Western history and culture is the subject of *Anno Domini: Jesus through the Centuries*, the most ambitious feature exhibition to date by the Provincial Museum of Alberta, in Edmonton.

The exhibition, which runs from October 7, 2000 to January 7, 2001 is the brainchild of David Goa, Folklife Curator for the museum, who was inspired by the writings of Dr. Jaroslav Pelikan of Yale University, especially the book *Jesus Through the Centuries: His place in the History of Culture*. Echoing Pelikan's views, Goa said, "Jesus is far too important a figure to be left only to the theologians and the Church. *Anno Domini* explores not what Jesus meant, because that is the province of Christians and churches, but what his person and teaching have been taken to mean." Goa explains in promotional literature for the exhibition: "This is a cultural exhibition and I hope it offers everyone new ideas about where we've been as a culture and fresh perspectives on where we are now — at the beginning of this new millennium."

Goa said he was "surprised that no large and prestigious museum or art gallery had proposed such an exhibition to Professor Pelikan, but perhaps the reasons are obvious. Art galleries focus on connoisseur exhibitions and the cultural climate of our times has made museums of history and culture shy about examining the religious dimensions of North American culture."

A bold approach

But the Edmonton exhibition takes a bold approach in examining the impact of Jesus on



Western civilization. It features 325 artifacts dating from the third to the 20th century, including paintings, stained glass, and illuminated manuscripts. These artworks come from 58 museums and art galleries around the world, and from private collections.

The exhibition makes use of many media, including film and music. One highlight is the world premiere of the film *Jesus Through the Age of Television*, which explores the deeply human themes of the Beatitudes. Historic footage of people and events including Gandhi, Mother Teresa, the school shooting in Taber, Alberta, and the conflict in Ireland demonstrate how Jesus and his teachings have been used to shape and influence society in the age of television. The film was created by Goa and others in partnership with the CBC.

18 themes

The exhibition explores 18 themes related to how different ages identified Jesus, including: Turning Point in History, King of Kings, Teacher of Common Sense, Prince of Peace, Rabbi, and Liberator.

Several films exploring Christian themes will be shown at the museum, such as: *The Apostle* (from 1997), and *Barabbas* (1961).

Psalms, hymns and songs — ancient and modern, from many cultures which have embraced Christianity — will be featured in a series of concerts planned for November and December.

Two live theatre presentations will take place in December: *Julian of Norwich*, a play about the 14th century English mystic; and *St. Marguerite Bourgeoys*, a play about Canada's first saint, whom the museum describes as "a central figure in the development of civil life in Quebec and a cornerstone in restoring a regard for the innate dignity of women and children."

'Who Do You Say that I am?'

On October 12, a discussion will take place on the theme: "Who Do You Say that I am?" Jesus' question to his disciples will be discussed from Jewish, Muslim, Orthodox, Catholic, Evangelical and Liberal Protestant perspectives.

A highlight will be a stained glass window created by German artist Johannes Schreiter, who has donated the window to the museum. The *Physics Window* explores human genius and divine grace, according to the museum. Two biblical verses — one forewarning the coming apocalypse, the other affirming God's undying love for creation — are placed above Albert Einstein's equation, E=mc2, which revolutionized science but also gave rise to the destruction inflicted by the atom bomb.

Perfect timing

According to the museum, the timing is perfect for this exhibition. "What better figure is there to focus on at the turn of the millennium than the person whose birth marked the beginning of our calendars? Second, the historical impact of the figure of Jesus on art, idea, music, politics, society and culture is unequivocal. Our obligation as a museum is to offer the public a window onto this part of the cultural fabric of our world."

In preparing the exhibition, Goa briefed many religious leaders on a local, national and international level, and received many letters of support and encouragement. The museum also had a local advisory committee which included Christian religious leaders.

Goa explains, "Since Alberta has become home to Christians from all parts of Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America over the last century, and since its cultural landscape reflects the pluralism of this grand tradition, it is perhaps appropriate that this exhibition is born of the soil of our province."

The Canadian government has provided $350,000 in funding for the exhibition, through the Canada Millennium Partnership Program.

Traffic Window (1987), *by Johannes Schreiter, part of the* Anno Domini: Jesus through the Centuries *exhibition in Edmonton. Schreiter's* Physics Window *is also featured.*

Christian website for high school students

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. (EP) — The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA) is taking the gospel to young people through the Internet. The ministry recently announced the launch of a new youth discipleship Web site designed especially for high school students called Passageway.org (**www.passageway.org**).

"The purpose of Passageway, first and foremost, is as a follow-up tool to the youth night of the Billy Graham crusades and the Franklin Graham festivals," explains content editor Steve Knight. "What we're trying to do is provide youth with a resource for further spiritual growth and trying to touch on topics that youth are excited about and interested in, while giving them an opportunity to ask questions and get answers."

Passageway.org is a place for young people to interact with each other and learn to live the Christian faith more fully. There are articles on pop culture and interviews with Christian authors and recording artists. Passageway's graphic designer, Matthew Taylor, says the "Q&A" (question and answer) section is perhaps the most valuable part of the site. Passageway visitors can e-mail their questions, and the answers are provided from a biblical perspective.

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Church

Catholic declaration threatens Catholic-Protestant dialogue

VATICAN CITY — In the first week of September, the Catholic Church issued *Dominus Iesus*, a statement on the way of salvation and the role of the Church, which emphatically reaffirms the traditional teaching that the Church of Rome is the only true church, "in the proper sense."

Statement raises consternation

It was directed mainly at the Catholic Church's own theologians, some of whom, the leadership feels, have fallen prey to relativism and pluralism. The statement, however, raised considerable consternation among those, Catholic and Protestant, who have been engaged in ecumenical dialogue since Vatican II, held in the mid-1960s.

In warning the faithful against increasingly popular notions of truth that all religions have only part of the truth and that all provide ways to the same God, the statement reiterates the Catholic teaching that the way to truth and salvation for everyone is through the Lord Jesus Christ as revealed in Scripture and as mediated by the Body of Christ, the Church of Rome. The document reminds Catholics that only churches that have a valid Episcopate, which means bishops consecrated by the Pope, and which therefore alone can genuinely administer the Eucharist, the Body of Christ, and the other sacraments, can be regarded as true churches. It goes on to caution bishops against using the term "sister churches" of any other communions besides the Orthodox Church, with which it has been in communion for hundreds of years. All others are referred to not as churches but as "ecclesial communities," which might be translated as semblances of churches. All such communities, the document says, are in a gravely deficient situation regarding salvation, although they have not "been deprived of significance and importance in the mystery of salvation."

Cardinal Ratzinger, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith which drew up the declaration, explained: "It must always be clear, when the expression 'sister churches' is used in this proper sense, that the one, holy, Catholic and apostolic Universal Church is not sister but 'mother' of all the particular churches." He went on to argue that without a clear concept of truth, of the universality [exclusiveness] of Christ and the Church, dialogue becomes pointless, for it is a search for truth. Esteem and respect for other ecclesial communities and religions, he stressed, "do not diminish the unique and original character of the revelation of Jesus Christ, and do not limit in the least the missionary task of the Church." The inter-religious dialogue in which the Catholic Church has engaged other faiths, he said, is simply "part of her evangelizing mission."

Vatican 'dealt a blow'

Ecumenical News International said "the Vatican has dealt a blow to Catholic-Protestant relations and published a sampling of reactions from Protestant leaders. A spokesman for the World Alliance of Reformed Churches told ENI: "Vatican II's statement that the one church of Jesus Christ 'subsists' in the Roman Catholic Church was widely recognised as opening up an ecumenically important distinction between the Christian church and the Church of Rome. *Dominus Iesus* is part of a sustained effort by Catholic conservatives to deny this, and to return to what is, even in Catholic terms, an over-simple identification of the two."

In a statement issued for the World Council of Churches, Tom Best, a theologian and WCC staff member, said: "All churches have gained enormously from the recent entry — through the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s — of the Roman Catholic Church into the ecumenical movement. Within the framework of the WCC, and in the wider ecumenical movement, many sensitive conversations are underway about the relationships of the churches to one another. What a loss if these were hindered — or even damaged — by language which precludes further discussion of the issues."

"By restating the long-held view of the Roman Catholic Church on the position of other Christian churches, this document breaks no new ground," Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey said. "But neither does it fully reflect the deeper understanding that has been achieved through ecumenical dialogue and co-operation during the past 30 years. "The idea that Anglican and other churches are not 'proper churches' seems to question the considerable ecumenical gains we have made."

Jerry Rankin, of the Southern Baptist Convention, said, "I think most Southern Baptists would strongly agree that the trend toward religious relativism and pluralism should be rejected. The way to salvation is a narrow path. We emphatically disagree with the Vatican, however, on the direction that path takes: Salvation comes by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ and Christ alone — not through any institutional church body, be it Baptist, Catholic or otherwise."

Contradiction underlined

An article in the *Los Angeles Times* expressed the opinion that the document underlines "a contradiction of John Paul's 22-year-old reign: No other pope has worked harder to mend rifts between Christian churches and promote understanding with non-Christian religions, yet he has rigidly upheld church dogma and traditions that antagonize other faiths."

In an interview with Father Angelo Amato, a theological consultant of the Congregation, Zenit.org, the Catholic news service, asked him about its implications for ecumenical dialogue. He explained *Dominus Iesus* as a clarification of Catholic identity which should not put brakes on dialogue but sets the conditions for it. "Dialogue is founded precisely on reciprocal identity: this does not mean a lack of respect in relations with other religions, but only an expression of our own identity. The dialogue can converge on many aspects: on peace, co-operation, international solidarity, harmony among peoples, ecology, etc. ... We have great openness in regard to other religions, great respect, and we are also very ready for dialogue and, in fact, dailogue is taking place; however, this should not make us lose our identity."

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Church in Uganda rises from the ashes

UGANDA (Religion Today) — The church in Uganda is flourishing after nearly being destroyed.

A spiritual renewal is taking place in the central African nation, Southern Baptist missionary Rob Ackerman told Religion Today. He works with tribal people in northwestern Uganda near its borders with Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. "It's been a very open climate and quite easy" to preach the gospel, he said. Churches are growing and making an impact on society.

The spiritual climate is vastly different today from the years when Christians were horribly persecuted under dictator Idi Amin. Seeking to promote Islam, Amin tried to crush the churches. Smaller denominations were banned, churches and Christian schools were closed, key Christian leaders were executed or exiled, and thousands of lay people were killed.

The church was in a shambles. Then a succession of civil wars after Amin's ouster in 1979 left the economy in ruins. At least 800,000 people died during Amin's rule and in subsequent wars and famines.

Uganda had highest AIDS infection rate

AIDS ravaged the country by the mid-1980s. Uganda had the highest infection rate of any African nation and about 30 percent of the population was HIV-positive by 1992, according to *Operation World*. The disease left thousands of orphans and families without a breadwinner.

The suffering caused Ugandans to cry out to God for help, according to John Mulinde of World Trumpet Ministries. "It was no average prayer, but the deep and lasting prayer characteristic of revival movements."

Yoweri Museveni, a professed Christian, came to power in 1986 and gradually brought political and economic stability, Mulinde said. Rebel groups in the north continue their harassment, but Museveni is firmly established and, while Uganda remains poor, the economy has seen six per cent growth for the past six years.

Uganda's churches have rebuilt and are more mature, addressing topics of national interest such as the family, education, social injustice, and poverty, said Mulinde. "There is a notable unity between the churches. God's Spirit is moving everywhere."

Churches have played a crucial role in the declining rate of AIDS. Catholics and Protestants are educating young people about moral issues involved in sexuality and encouraging them to abstain from sex before marriage, according to news reports. Churches provide job training and biblical counseling to help young women leave prostitution.

First lady Janet Museveni, an outspoken Christian, runs a youth ministry to teach children about the dangers of AIDS. Every year thousands of teens and their families meet to discuss biblical morality as it relates to sexuality and AIDS.

China brands Christian churches as evil cults

HONG KONG (Religion Today) — China's underground Christian churches are "evil cults," Chinese authorities said. The government is using laws passed to control the Falun Gong spiritual movement against unregistered house churches, according to news reports.

Eighty-five members of a Protestant house church movement are charged with "using an evil cult to obstruct justice," according to police documents obtained by the Hong Kong-based Information Center for Human Rights & Democracy, Reuters reported. On August 23, Henan province police raided a house congregation belonging to the China Fang-cheng Church, detaining 130 members and three Taiwan-born U.S. citizens. The three missionaries later were released.

The indictments are certain to lead to jail terms and could indicate the beginning of a government crackdown on churches not approved by the government, the centre said. House churches are being lumped in with spiritual movements that the Communist government deems dangerous to society. At least 14 Christian groups were labeled "evil sects" by the government last year, Henry Chu, one of the American missionaries detained last month, told Reuters.

Restrictions ban teaching children the faith

Followers of the China Fang-cheng Church are "Bible-based Christians," Chu said. The movement has at least 500,000 members, according to the centre. The Fang-cheng Church refuses to join the government sanctioned Protestant church because of restrictions that contradict the Bible, including strict rules on proselytizing and a ban on teaching children the faith, Chu said.

China's underground Catholic Church also suffers. Police in Fujian province arrested a priest, two nuns, and 20 other Catholics loyal to the Vatican last month, The Associated Press reported. The priest, Liu Shaozhang, was beaten so badly that he was bleeding and spitting up blood, witnesses said. The two nuns have been released but the others are still in custody.

Jiang Ming Yuan, an auxiliary bishop, has been missing since police arrested him last week, and two other bishops from Hebei have been missing since 1996, AP said. An estimated eight million Chinese worship outside China's government-sanctioned Catholic Church, which does not recognize the authority of the pope.

Famous prisoner freed

This past summer China's most famous house church prisoner, Mr. Xu Yongze, was freed by Chinese authorities after serving a three-year "re-education through labor" sentence for establishing an illegal organization. The 58-year-old founder of the Born Again movement said that he was tortured and interrogated. Once his jailers handcuffed each arm to an iron gate, so that when the gates were opened, he was stretched up off the ground in a gruesome crucifix position. He expressed his appreciation for the international pressure that was put on the Chinese government to treat him fairly.

Jerusalem lifted high

Chapter & Verse
Al Wolters

"The whole land, from Geba to Rimmon, south of Jerusalem, will become like the Arabah. But Jerusalem will be raised up and remain in its place, from the Benjamin Gate to the site of the First Gate, to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the royal winepresses. It will be inhabited; never again will it be destroyed. Jerusalem will be secure." (Zechariah 14:10-11, NIV)

The book of Zechariah is notoriously difficult. The church father Jerome already wrote that it was *obscurissimus liber*, "a most obscure book," and the medieval Jewish commentator Rashi wrote: "The prophecy of Zechariah is extremely enigmatic, because it contains visions resembling a dream that requires an interpretation. We cannot ascertain the truth of its interpretation until the teacher of righteousness comes." Richard Capellus, a Protestant commentator in the seventeenth century, put it even more graphically: "among the Prophets Zechary [i.e. Zechariah] is a Deep wherein an Elephant may swim."

"In this chapter I give up"

Chapter 14 of this famously difficult book is especially hard to interpret. It begins by telling the story of how God will alternately attack and defend Jerusalem, and in the process will split the Mount of Olives in two. Night will be done away with, and permanent streams will flow both westwards and eastwards from Jerusalem. Only the Lord will be acknowledged king, and Jerusalem will be lifted high above the surrounding countryside, as described in the verses we have quoted above.

What are we to make of these strange prophecies, and of the equally baffling predictions which follow in this chapter? Are they purely symbolic, or do they refer to real historical events? If the latter, are they events which have already taken place, or will they take place in the end times? It is perhaps understandable that Martin Luther, when he came to chapter 14 in his commentary on Zechariah, freely admitted his perplexity: "Here, in this chapter, I give up. For I am not sure what the prophet is talking about."

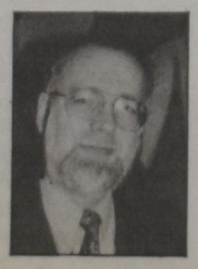
Although there is very little agreement among commentators about what the descriptions of Zechariah 14 refer to (there is a wide range of opinion even among confessionally orthodox interpreters), the actual descriptions themselves are not that hard to understand. In the quoted verses we are told that the whole mountainous countryside around Jerusalem "will become like the Arabah," that is, the deep depression in Palestine along which we find the Jordan River and the Dead Sea. However, while the surrounding countryside sinks to the level of the Dead Sea, Jerusalem itself — or rather its central part, concentrated around Mount Zion — will be raised up even higher than it already was, and there its inhabitants will dwell. It seems that the Holy City will be perched atop a towering peak, overlooking the lowered and flattened region round about. Like an eagle's aerie it will be out of reach of anything that might threaten it: "never again will it be destroyed; Jerusalem will be secure."

Literal or non-literal?

There are many Christians today who believe that this prophecy will be literally fulfilled when Christ returns. Perhaps they are right — although a non-literal reading has been much more common in the history of Christian interpretation. But on either view the dramatic picture of Jerusalem and its inhabitants, raised high to a position of lofty eminence and unassailable security, is a vivid reminder to believers of the ultimate safety which God promises his people. Read in the light of the New Testament, this Old Testament picture of the promised future reminds Christians that in Christ they ultimately have nothing to fear. The gates of hell cannot prevail against the church of God.

It is probably not wise to insist on a particular interpretation of this enigmatic chapter. Already the church father Jerome, writing around A.D. 400, refused to commit himself to one of the conflicting interpretations current in his day. He wrote as follows: "The Jews say that these things will be fulfilled under Gog [that is, in the end times]; others that they were accomplished in part in the times of the Macedonians, Egyptians, and other nations. We, leaving the truth of the time to the judgment of the Lord, would explain what is written."

And what is written, namely the bold imagery of the inspired prophet, is a message of hope and encouragement to believers of all ages.



Al Wolters teaches Bible, Greek and Hebrew at Redeemer University College, Ancaster, Ontario. He's been working on a commentary on Zechariah for a long time.

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COUNTRY COUNTERCULTURE

VERN M. GLEDDIE

The Earthkeeping organization is in financial crisis. This small Christian organization of mostly farmers is struggling to meet its expenses. But then, that has been the case for at least half of its life of almost 30 years.

Too bad.

How can it be that in the Bible Belt, Christian organizations barely exist?

Perhaps it is because there are many Christians who do not have a tradition which allows for the relevance of scripture to life other than the spiritual. When Earthkeeping was first organized (under the name Christian Farmers Federation of Alberta), its existence was challenged by some people active in secular organizations. For instance, the president of a large secular farm organization attended our first annual meeting to persuade us to disband. He identified himself as a believer. Others in his organization would remind us that their president was a Christian, presumably putting a Christian stamp on their policies.

Why split farmers?

"Why split farmers by starting another farm organization?" people would ask, because they did not understand the possibility of a different perspective.

Surprisingly, there are four sizeable farming communities in Alberta where churches are filled on Sundays with people whose Christian heritage puts great stock in the sovereignty of God over all of life, including farming. That same theology demands community response from believers.

God has gifted each of us uniquely for working together. We need each other; we are made that way. Why wouldn't a host of farmers from those four farming areas seek each other out to join their talents and resources in working out and delivering a Christian perspective on food and agricultural issues?

A Christian-principled farm agency

Some of them did. They saw a need and possibilities for a Christian-principled farm organization, got it rolling, and for a few years it grew in numbers and strength. Meetings were lively and well attended. Earthkeeping had the ear of the press and well worked-out policies contributed to mainstream agricultural decision-making.

Then a certain lukewarmness, even coolness, began to characterize Earthkeeping. There came a watershed annual meeting when the membership refused to agree on three issues: They had no toleration for discussion of the North American free trade proposal, which was being debated in parliament at the time. Nor would our members from the irrigated farm areas countenance an alternative to the Government's proposal to dam the Old Man River. And finally, the membership would not agree to the board's motion to expand our work on global issues.

Members began to drop out rather than to deal in community with difficult issues. Some issues came too close to home.

"We are leaving to support other ministries," said people who knew very well their own involvement in farming is to be a ministry.

"Earthkeeping is becoming socialistic, maybe even communistic" said others, who knew very well that to work in community does not necessarily make us pink or red: God has designed us to work that way.

"Earthkeeping is too concerned with global issues" said others, who had heard too much about how our western spending habits cause extreme hardship elsewhere in the world.

It is too bad that we in the church can be so heavily influenced by the world's emphasis on the individual: "getting ahead," "pulling oneself up by ones own bootstraps" (an impossibility!), "every man for himself". A bumper sticker says it all: "The self-made man worships his creator."

An innovator in saving farm land

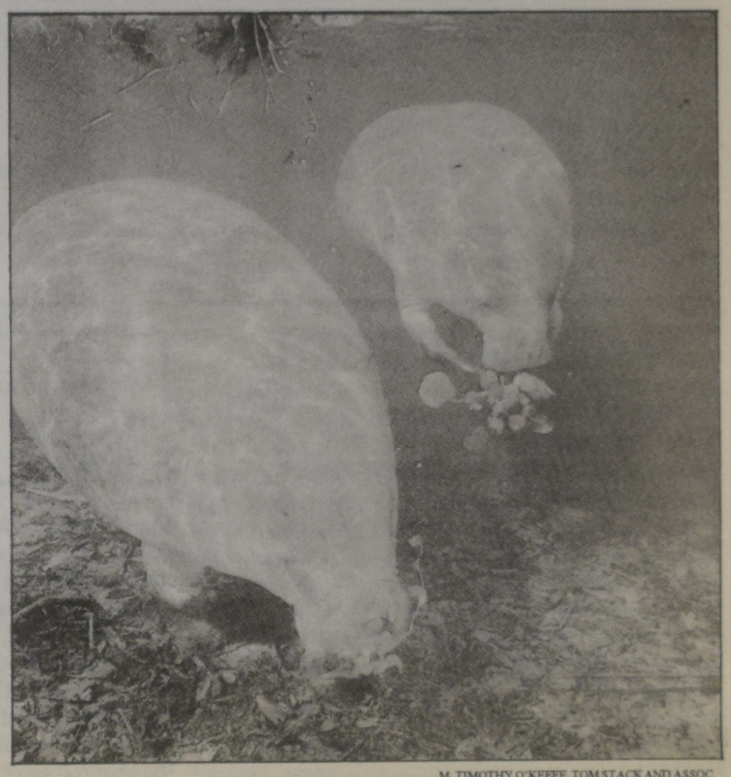
It is interesting, on the other hand, that, while Christians are rejecting a Christian initiative, some in the world see unique possibilities for it. A recent column prominently featured in *The Edmonton Journal* described Earthkeeping as "taking the gentle approach".

Earthkeeping has been an innovator in promoting the saving of prime agricultural land, introducing the principle of stewardship, taking a multi-factored and integrated approach to problems, thus ignoring the left-right labelling, sensitizing society to the unbearable burden our rich lifestyles place on others, and so on.

Earthkeeping will go on. There are people who are committed to serving God by searching out his will in the everyday task of farming. A remnant will persevere.

Vern Gleddie has a sheep ranch near Edmonton, Alta.

The papier-mache manatee monster



M. TIMOTHY O'KEEFE, TOM STACK AND ASSOC.

Two real-life manatees — not papier-mache ones.

Frank DeVries

It was one of those times when as an elementary school teacher at Pacific Christian School in Victoria, B.C. I had begun discussing with my grade 6 class how together we could go beyond mere words and actually do something about preserving and enhancing our beautiful planet. It was Katie who came up with what in retrospect was the fateful suggestion, "Why don't we adopt a manatee?"

What's a manatee?

Immediate problem: I didn't have a clue what a manatee was. Now, you know we teachers never let on when we don't know something. However, in general we're a pretty resourceful lot, and so I, too, thought up a solution to the problem so suddenly thrust upon me.

"What a great idea, Katie," I said, "Why don't you go up front and explain to class what you have in mind?"

Quickly we were informed that in looks a manatee resembles an oversized seal without hind legs, although it does have paddle-shaped front legs; it has a rounded tail, lives off weeds and water grasses, and grows up to about 14 feet in length. Also called a sea cow, it is a large, endangered aquatic mammal that lives in the coastal waters off Florida as well as at several other places around the world.

It is endangered mostly because manatees habitually swim close to the surface where careless boaters drive over them, cutting them with their propellers, so injuring them. To help their cause a number of people in Florida have organized a "Manatee Preservation Society" which regularly quarantines them, feeds them, and in other ways cares for them. To take care of one for a year costs about $40, and if we were to adopt one we would be sent an official certificate confirming our new status as adoptive parents of a manatee.

Forthwith money was collected, sent up, and within a few weeks we were so registered. Alas, the story didn't end there.

A not well thought-through idea

Some weeks later the school was to organize a science fair scheduled to begin on a Friday afternoon and to last through the evening. When discussing with class what our Grade 6 might contribute to it, meaningful suggestions just didn't come forward. It was then that once again my typically impulsive cortex convulsed as it was seized by the birthpangs of a not well thought-through idea, and so I spewed out, "Why don't we build a life-sized replica of a manatee?"

My, what a good idea that was everybody thought, and suggestions as to how to go about doing that came fast: make a

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framework of wooden slats nailed together, covered by chickenwire, and topped off with papier-mache and a coat of paint. It sounded simple and straightforward.

We started our project on a Monday. Students had brought all needed material and everything proceeded as planned until the papier-mache part. Now visualize this classroom scene: a 14-foot-long, roundish manatee frame four feet in diameter stretching diagonally from one corner of the room to almost the other one, and several layers of newspapers on the floor to protect the carpet from spillage of paste. We were going to work in shifts: two buckets of paste for the pasters, stacks of newspapers for those ripping them into strips, with the remainder of students sitting around reading or watching, awaiting their turn. Then the fun began.

High-stepping and snowshoeing

Within moments, scores of kids with chunks of newspapers stuck to their feet were high-stepping and snowshoeing all over the room looking for all the world like a bevy of plovers on a hot griddle. One stepped in one of the buckets – that helped.

However, in due time the thing got done, and we all stood back looking at a manateean monster covered by several dripping layers of the latest news. The kids thought it looked cool and awesome, but to me it looked like the Graf Zeppelin had landed in my classroom: it was enormous in size. All we had to do now was wait for it to dry for painting to begin on Thursday. However, having not had enough foresight, nor having experience with this kind of "art" work, I was apprehensive about it not being dry enough to be painted next day, so we left the heat on overnight.

Next morning I went to school early, walked into the classroom, and froze, my heart pounding in my throat: because the layers of wet paper had been far too heavy, our manatee had folded into itself and lay on the floor in a collapsed, soggy heap of slats, chickenwire and papier-mache. Despairingly I lapsed into the familiar soliloquy I used so many times before: "Frankie boy, you've done it this time. You beefheaded bungler, what are you going to do now?"

The answer was not forthcoming, and as I stood there hyperventilating and in near catatonic stupor, the first kids walked in. When they noticed their manatee, their eyes got as big as saucers. At first they just stared, not saying anything. Then, as always looking for magical answers, they asked the question I had been asking myself, "What are we going to do now, Mr. D.?"

Well, fortunately Mr. D. knew all about trepanning, and so with knife and sidecutters I carved a two-foot hole into the side of the carcass for some to crawl in and try to hoist up the collapsed ribcage. Everybody wanted that job, but after some arguing two students armed with a 10-foot 2 x 4 and a number of supports were given the privilege of crawling into the still-moist cadaver to attempt lifting it up.

Sudden disaster

However, suddenly and almost simultaneously the props slipped from the newly to be installed spinal column and broke through the dorsal side of the beast. I heard a couple of yelps, to this day not being sure whether they were from the kids or the manatee, and where at first our animal had resembled a massive grub on anabolic steroids it now looked just like a wet and slimy large something in severe need of chiropractic adjustment.

Still, it finally all got done, and although not quite as well as we had visualized it, we thought our project still looked pretty much like a manatee, albeit somewhat of a flattened-out one with a number of unplanned humps on its back. And on the day of the fair many people came and admired our effort as they carefully navigated around the blimp and read all about manatees on a large display board that the children had put up. But then, just before closing time, some kid of about five managed to prick our bubble of accomplishment.

This sweet little boy walked into our classroom followed by his mother who was pushing a stroller. As he came into the doorway he stopped, looked at our manatee, turned back to his Mom and yelled, "Hey, Mom, look at the funny whale. It looks real funny!" It was at that moment in time that I realized how much I truly loved little boys of about five.

Frank and his wife Celia, both retired Christian School teachers, share common interests: reading, gardening, cooking, powerwalking and sea-kayaking in their double kayak. They live in Nanaimo, B.C.

Taking stock of faith and politics

John Hiemstra

Stockwell Day's public profession of Christ comes as a breath of fresh air in the rancid atmosphere of today's secular politics. When asked by the media if his faith would affect how he governs, Day responded "Absolutely it would. Of course it would."

This exciting and open-hearted profession by the new leader of the Canadian Alliance Party takes great courage, especially since opinion polls show most Canadians, including Christians, think faith should be kept private.

Admiration of courage and conviction does not, however, mean we have to endorse Day's policies or strategies. I feel kinship with Day's emphasis on life-affirming policies for abortion and euthanasia, providing support for families, justly funding independent schools, and prohibiting child pornography.

Some other policies, however, raise red flags. When Christ's name is sounded in tandem with an endorsement of the saving power of economic growth, my alarm bells begin to ring. The 'poor, the widow and the orphan' do not seem to figure prominently in Day's speeches. Furthermore, Day often deals with aboriginal, ethnic and French diversity in Canada as merely individualistic issues.

Political strife within the Christian community

I can already hear the protests, "finally Christians can rally around Stockwell Day's leadership and the critics are already hounding him!"

My worry, to the contrary, is that our joy at this public profession of Christ in politics soon fades into embarrassment over our deep disagreements concerning what Christ means in politics.

Intense disagreement is already surfacing among Christians over Day's policy positions. The same is true for policies of Christians in the other parties, e.g. Elsie Wayne (Progressive Conservative), Bill Blaikie (NDP), or for that matter Ron Gray (Christian Heritage Party).

Christians need to face the problem of political disagreement head on and address the underlying sources of our divisions.

We could start by repenting of our historical tendency to be irenic on divisive political issues — that is, Canadian Christians have too quickly glazed over deep differences and bypassed troublesome issues, instead opting for superficial harmony.

To be genuine agents of healing in public life, Christians need to engage one another, work harder at understanding each other, deliberate communally on hot issues, and together forge new biblical approaches to political problems and partisan options.

Roots of conflict in Christian politics

For the sake of initiating discussion, I will argue that three types of questions underlie our Christian political disagreements.

First, our conflicting politics sometimes reflect our different experiences and contexts. Stockwell Day speaks as a Western Canadian, for example, reflecting regional experiences and interests that differ from other regions.

PHILL SNEL

Stockwell Day

Local interests and experiences can divide, but they can also be the building blocks of unity. If we listen carefully to one another and biblically test what God is revealing in our daily life-experiences, we can identify genuine regional interests and incorporate them into our Christian conceptions of the national interest.

Unholy alliances with -isms

Second, our policy disputes may also be caused by different worldviews. This is a touchy issue for all of us, since we are all inclined to make unholy alliances with materialism, socialism, populism, nationalism, capitalism, technicism, globalism, or individualism. These compromises, whether we do them on purpose or not, can generate hurtful political differences within the Christian community. We owe it to each other to gently expose them.

Stockwell Day's advocacy for a flat rate tax, for example, makes little sense to me apart from a neo-liberal view of economics. I might be wrong, but this possibility leaps to mind when I hear him distinguish social from fiscal conservatives. Neo-liberals, among others, assume a distinction between policies involving morality and those that are simply technical. We are encouraged, thereby, to conclude that a flat-rate tax is technically good for economic growth apart from any moral concern for equity.

A third source of conflict in the Christian community is caused by our views of the 'role of government.' More often than not, Christians implicitly or explicitly borrow these views from secular political theory.

Stockwell Day openly pushes the populist idea that the state is simply a procedural instrument. Referendums, initiative, recall, and free votes, are merely techniques that allow the majority of fundamentally good citizens to exercise their common sense in making good policies. But does it?

The Canadian Alliance has already been soundly criticised for the implications of this view of the state for abortion policy. The same problems emerge for many other issues. A populist view of government risks sacrificing justice and truth on the alter of majoritarian power politics.

Exposing ideologies within our politics is a difficult and sensitive task. Everyone, including myself, will naturally react: "are you suggesting my views are shaped by secular thinking?" If we are unwilling to discuss these underlying issues, however, Christians will be condemned to slip into even deeper irrelevance in Canadian politics.

We urgently need to engage in mutual admonition, spiritual discernment, and wise biblical learning, no matter how uncomfortable it may be. So, let the analysis continue. Why not react to this column?

John Hiemstra is Associate Professor of Political Studies at The King's University College in Edmonton.

Going home

Back from being back in Friesland

PHOTOS: COURTESY ALICE & BERT WITVOET

Alice and Bert take a break from biking near Enschede, Friesland.

Bert Witvoet

Alice and I have returned from a month-long stay in the Netherlands. Our special focus was Friesland and its celebration of the year 2000, called "Simmer Twa Tusend" (Summer 2000). From all over the world, Frisian immigrants came to their home province — from New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, Argentina, Brazil, the United States and Canada. It was a memorable experience. I got closer to my roots again and to the land of my birth. I came away feeling I still belong. Speaking the language quite fluently, both Dutch and Frisian, helped. And hearing it spoken reminded me of my youth — my grandmother, my uncles and aunts and school friends.

Now that we're back, it almost seems as if we were never away. But the memories stay in my thoughts and dreams. They're a little vague, as if I'm looking through a piece of canal ice. Those Frisians put together a grand celebration. In every town and village there were special events and reunions. And they certainly made us feel welcome! I never thought it would be this much fun — and this meaningful.

Upper crust

When we boarded the plane in Toronto, we had a pleasant surprise. Although we were fairly late checking in, and there were no window seats left, we were told that, although we had paid regular fare, we had been placed in the first-class section of the Jumbo Jet, upstairs. Wow! What a way to travel. The minute we sat down in the spacious seats, we were served a glass of champagne. Meals were a la carte and the service, superb. So this is how the other side lives!

This was only the first in a series of bounties showered on us. Thanks to retired Calvin College professor Henry Baron, we had been offered the use of a house in Gorredyk, Friesland, for the whole month of July. The owners always spend their summer in a trailer, and they were willing to allow a couple from abroad to use their house to enjoy "Simmer Twa Tusend." What a wonderful gesture.

Next surprise. When we arrived in Amsterdam, we quickly made our way through customs, past a plaster cow announcing "Simmer 2000," to the car rental at Schiphol to pick up the car we had ordered. The car we wanted was not available, so we were upgraded to an Opel station wagon. "Alright, if you insist, we'll take the upgrade for the same price."

Special invitation

The bounties continued. When we arrived in Gorredyk, our hosts greeted us with coffee and *oranjekoek* (a Frisian specialty). They also showed us a generous supply of groceries, including other fancy pastries and baked goodies. Then they handed us a letter addressed to us from the RABO Bank in Friesland. It contained an invitation to come to Leeuwarden the next day as their guests for the grand opening of "Simmer 2000" by the Dutch Queen, again through Henry Baron's intervention.

We were picked up at nine the following morning. The invitation included coffee and cake at the bank with some 150 other guests, a special place near the Queen at the festivities, and a six-hour boat ride on the Frisian waters, with lunch, supper and various drinks provided. As in matters pertaining to the Kingdom of Heaven, it's not what you know but who you know that counts!

Thousands of Frisians gathered in the city square called "Het Saailan" sang the Frisian anthem, while everybody stood up — including the Queen. It surprised me that in the Queen's presence we did not sing the Dutch national anthem. If this was a *faux pas*, it wasn't ours but the organizers. We simply followed the program. But our friends assured us that Queen Beatrix was a good sport.

Most of the guests of the RABO Bank were immigrants whose experiences had been written up in a popular book by Hylke Speerstra entitled *'t Wrede Paradys* (The Cruel Paradise). We were supposed to stand in front of the bleachers, but because our invitation came late, we had no tickets. So when a guard stopped us, I told her we only had a letter, no tickets. She asked us to wait while she checked things out with Hylke Speerstra. Hylke, who was probably too busy to know all the details, said we could go on the bleachers. We ended up sitting quite close to the Queen. When Henry Baron asked us how we came to be so favored, I said, "When the Lord starts something, he finishes it."

Anniversary thoughts

Before leaving Canada, I had written an article in Dutch for my hometown paper about our immigration 50 years ago. Exactly 50 years ago this May 22, we celebrated our mother's birthday on a ship in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. Then as now, May 22 fell on a Monday. In my diary from those days I read how we had celebrated the day and how Mom received a telegram from her relatives and friends in Friesland. Here she was in the middle of the ocean, a widow with seven children, leaving everything she knew and loved behind. I'm glad we made it a special occasion for her. What we didn't know at the time is that Mom was exactly at the midpoint of her life. She had celebrated 41 birthdays in Holland, she celebrated one on the ocean and she would celebrate another 41 in Canada. Is it sentimentality that makes me see God's hand in that kind of symmetry? He would truly bless her decision to immigrate.

Before the war my dad had wanted to emigrate, but Mom didn't. She felt lost if she couldn't see the main tower of Joure. When my dad died after the war, and Mom had to take over the business while raising a large family, she felt less tied to Joure. Because two of her brothers already lived there, she was advised to go to Canada.

And so began the process that ended in us breaking our ties with Joure. Mom prayed more than she slept the weeks before we left. That last night in the Netherlands, she crept into grandmother's bed for comfort, an elderly aunt told me during this visit. But once she was on the boat and saw the coast of Canada, all her worries fell away, Mom herself told me. She was never homesick after that.

I had written this in my article for the *Jouster Courant*. Writing the article prepared me for the visit. It also warned people who knew me that somebody with the moniker "*monsterbolsje*" was coming.

No ordinary maid

On July 14, there was a reunion in my hometown of Jouster. It was a wonderful occasion at which we were greeted in three languages by the mayor of this municipality called Skarsterland. Since we could understand all three languages, that part of the ceremony was a little boring, except for the moment he got confused and didn't know what language he was in anymore. I met several people from my school days and several who remembered my family very well.

One was a seventy-year-old woman, who approached me and told me that she had served in our household as a maid when she was 19 years old. I suddenly remembered her: "Hammy de Jong!" Hammy told me that the first task my mother gave her was hanging up the wash. There must have been plenty of it as it represented all the clothing worn the previous week by a family of eight, plus my grandmother. As Hammy was hanging up the wash, she noticed that my mother and grandmother were watching her from behind the curtains. That didn't bother her too much since her mother had taught her to do it properly, she told her: "underpants with underpants, undershirts with undershirts." After Hammy was finished, my mother told her that she had done a good job: "underpants with underpants, and undershirts with undershirts." I laughed: in those days there had to be order in the world, even on the wash line. Hammy told me several other things, but I won't hang out the family laundry here. After all, there has to be order in this paper (and what will the neighbors say?).

Thoughts of past victory

On another day, Alice and I witnessed a competition in Joure called "ringstekerij." It involved a man and a woman dressed in Frisian costume riding in a horse and buggy. He held the reins while she had to poke a stick through a ring on a pole. There were eight such stations along the main street of Joure. All contestants made four drives past the eight stations to collect a total of 80 points if all 32 rings were speared by the lady. One couple managed to collect all 80 points.

The Dutch Queen carrying a bouquet at the opening of Simmer 2000 in Leeuwarden.

This event was exhilarating for me because I was standing right in front of my childhood home, and I remembered a picture I have of my dad and mom taking part in such a competition. It must have been taken around 1929. Surprisingly, my mom and dad won that year. I say, surprisingly, because my dad had never driven a horse and buggy before. I was told the horse was quite tame and trotted fairly slowly past each station.

But their success was also partly due to the fact that my mother had a very steady hand: she was a good seamstress and she could spank fairly well, too. I drank in the beauty of the costumes, the high-stepping Frisian horses and the shiny buggies. I really felt connected to my past!

Out of respect

One evening I visited my father's grave just outside Joure. More than 54 years ago we laid his body to rest there. I recall the cold January day we walked behind the cortege — a black funeral wagon pulled by black horses, all covered in black cloth and the funeral director with a black Napoleon hat in front. My dad did not get to immigrate, at least not to Canada. My mother always thought of Canada as a kind of Canaan, the land of promise, but if anyone had a right to say that he was entering the promised land, it was my father.

I said a prayer as I stood at the grave, thanking God for my dad and expressing the hope to see him some day. I bent over and pulled a few weeds, while stirring the gravel with my hand, as if to perform an act of service for him. It was all symbolic and very personal, of course. There wasn't anything left of my dad there, I imagine.

What amazed me on my visit to Joure is how many people remembered my dad as a good craftsman. He was a hairdresser, and a very good one, it seems. One person said he was an artist. Another that he was a first-class tradesman. Yet another, "He had it in his fingers." To hear that more than 50 years after his death I found remarkable. Yes, my mother and siblings had made similar claims, but they were partial. To hear it from a stranger means much more.

Easy rider

Biking in Holland — ah yes! Alice and I really enjoyed that. Especially in the northern provinces, where the land is so flat. A Canadian who visited Friesland told me the other day: "Biking is so easy there. It's like pushing a marble across a counter. You just let it go and it travels by itself." Of course, he overlooked the possibility of a stiff head wind. But he's right, most of the time biking there is a breeze (when there's no breeze). And there are so many good bike paths. One day we followed a marked route around Enschede, Alice's hometown, for about 60 kilometres.

Biking in Holland, however, is not just for sport. People shop on their bikes, they visit friends and go to school and church on bikes. Here in Canada, Alice and I bike almost every morning, but we do it for fitness. Bikes are different there, too. Here much of your weight hangs on your handle bars, but in Holland you sit up straight and your weight is on the saddle.

Bert Witvoet at his father's grave in Joure.

By the way, the people in Holland seem to be in good shape. We saw few people who were overweight. Does biking play a role here?

No regrets

I and three other immigrants were interviewed live on Frisian radio by author Hylke Speerstra and radio reporter Siepie Tichgelaar. It took place in the Harmonie in Leeuwarden. About two hundred spectators were sitting around tables with drinks or snacks, while we four immigrants from Brazil, South Africa, the U.S. and Canada talked about our experiences. A choir and a humorist added entertainment.

We were asked if we'd want to live in Friesland again. All of us said "No." Not that we don't like Friesland, but we've been incorporated into our new homeland. Besides, our kids and grandchildren live there. Above all, we have a task where we live. For people who see their life as service to God and neighbor, one's task is very important. I think of the proverb: "Bloom where God has planted you."

I don't really know the ultimate purpose or meaning of the immigration. After the Second World War there was a general pressure to immigrate, and each person and family had their own reasons. The coat has been cut and sewn, and there's no point in taking it apart. But for us old-emigrants (I use the term "emigrant" to indicate my separation from my homeland), our heart is divided. As a group of Frisian Canadians sang in the streets of Leeuwarden on July 1: "*Hup supengrottenbrei, wij binne Kanadesen. Hup supengrottenbrei, en Friezen bliuwe wij*" (We are Canadians but we remain Frisians). What do you make of that? Emigration has made me richer as well as poorer. Richer because I know two cultures; poorer because I always miss a part of myself.

A few reminders

By the way, we traveled regular class on our way back, fairly cramped. Maybe the Lord wanted to prepare us for our less luxurious life in Canada. We are, after all, ordinary people with modest expectations. In fact, the return trip was far from pleasant. One hour into our flight, the pilot informed us that we were returning to Amsterdam. We had hit a bird during our ascent and one of the motors had to be checked. An announcement like that is always a bit scary. You never know whether they're telling you everything. One hour later, we were circling Amsterdam to burn a little more fuel before landing.

We stayed in the plane on the tarmac for several hours before taking off again. No, there had been no damage to the motor and we could have stayed on course. But as one pilot said to complaining passengers on another flight: "Would you rather be in the air wishing you were on the ground, or on the ground wishing you were in the air?" Good point. We accepted the six-hour delay with as much grace as we could muster.

No separatism

Anyhow, we're back in Canada. I was a bit melancholic when at first I sat here in Canada listening to some of the Frisian CDs I took home. I wrote another article for my home paper in which I reflected on our visit. I had promised the editor of the *Jouster Courant* that I would. And I also sent her a Frisian poem I wrote, which I include here with a translation. Bear with me, those who don't understand the language. Be merciful. Frisian is, after all, my mother tongue.

The title "It Beste Lan" comes from the Frisian anthem, which proclaims Friesland as the best country in the world. Do the Frisians mean that? Does a mother mean it when she calls her daughter the cutest little girl in the whole world? Of course she does. And so we sing the Frisian anthem with a sincere tear in our eye, without the slightest hint of separatism or arrogance, knowing full well that we're engaging in patriotic hyperbole. Yet, it expresses a deep love for what is at bottom the place where our life was shaped.

If nothing else, the poem tells you that nostalgia can be destroyed by the minutest detail.

It Beste Lan

Mien hert is wer an Fryslan boun
no 'k jhir wer stean op Kanadese groun.
It fjilt wat frjemd oan no 'k wer Ingelsk sprek,
Asof 'k fortoevje oan de forkeerde kant van't hek.
Ik tink oan fjilden fier en wiid,
wer ik sa graag troch hinne riid,
oan swarte hynders en oan bonte ky,
die rounen der sa rustig bei.
It doarp mei earrebarren tink ik oan,
die strune der bei Akmaryp ien't lan.
die alde fugels fan 't verlien
die stiekum bei de widze stien.
"Earrebarre, mei 'k in lietse poppe?"
Ik hear 't us noch bei de Bewaarskoalle roppen.
Ik tink oan 't riden op de fiets,
jhir is 't sa grut, der is 't sa liets,
sa moai beriekbar op 't gemak.
Pas op, der leit wat hunnekak.
Dat heapke stront docht mei wer tinken:
Ien Fryslan is 't ek opgean, blinken en versinken.
Och, 't sal wer wenje hjir ien 't butenlan
Ik haw jhir ek in feste ban
mei minsken, stedden en natur.
Want sunder hun bin ik tock ek oerstjur?
Mien bern en lietsbern witte net oars
of Kanada is t' beste lan fan d' ierde, of course.
Se haw toch allegearre geliik:
De Friesen en de Kanadesen binne riik.
Lit us mar tankber wezze wer w' ek binne,
want oer us beiden strielt Gods warme sinne.

(Bert Witvoet, August 12, 2000)

The best country

My heart is tied to Friesland again
Now that I stand here on Canadian soil.
It feels a bit strange to talk English again,
As if I'm standing on the wrong side of the gate.
I think of fields far and wide,
through which I rode so gladly,
of black horses and spotted cows
who moved around so quietly.
I think of the colony of storks
who strutted in the fields of Akmaryp,
those ancient birds of my past,
who secretly stood near the crib.
"Stork, stork, may I have a little baby?'
I can still hear us call out at nursery school.
I think of riding on the bike,
It's so big here, and so small there,
so easily accessible.
Watch out, there's some dogshit.
That little pile of feces makes me think
in Friesland it's also, rise, shine and decline.
Oh, I will get used to things again here,
After all, I have a strong tie here
with people, cities and nature.
Without them I would be lost too.
My children and grandchildren think
that Canada is the best country in the world.
They are both right:
Frisians and Canadians are rich.
Let's be thankful, wherever we are,
Because over both of us shines God's warm sun.

Philosophy

Philosophical encounters: a tale of two conferences

CC FILES

Adrian and Wendy Helleman.

Adrian and Wendy Helleman

MOSCOW — At the end of August we had the privilege of participating in two philosophical conferences, the first in the Netherlands and the other in Russia. Not just observers, we gave presentations in both and experienced them closely. From the Dutch to the Russians! Could there be a greater contrast? Of course the topics of these meetings were important, but the difference between the two events motivated us to write about them.

Transforming role of Reformational philosophy

The Dutch conference, "Cultures and Christianity AD 2000" was organized by the Association for Reformational Philosophy, with Henk Geertsema as chairman. It had the challenging task of examining the transforming role of Reformational philosophy in many different cultures. Indeed, many participants from non-Western cultures were present and responded vigorously to the main speakers in the plenary sessions. Even questions from the floor were selected to encourage diverse viewpoints and not allow the Western one to dominate. With such international representation, the presentations and discussions were all in English, often heavily accented, but still understandable. Numerous workshops allowed for discussion in smaller groups, and these discussions often continued over meals and late into the evening.

Keynote speaker Dr. Bong Ho Son, from Korea, known to us from university days in Amsterdam of the '70s, is a professor who tries to put his faith into practice by encouraging a simple lifestyle and working with disabled people. Other main lecturers represented South Africa, the Netherlands, Mexico, England, and the United States. B.J. van der Walt spoke on "Culture, Worldview and Religion: Towards a Biblical-Reformational Perspective on Development." Adrian Vlot, a Dutch engineer, addressed "Cultural Diversity and Technological Development." Adolfo Garcia de la Sienra talked about "Reformational Economic Theory;" Elaine Storkey dealt with "The Family and Cultural Change." And James Skillen presented a paper on "Politics in One World."

Challenges of technology and globalization

Much of the discussion of this conference focused on the challenges of technology, development and globalization, topics with which everyone could identify from their own cultural perspective. But aside from this focus in the sessions, Dutch engineering and impressive efficiency were also on display at an excursion taking us to the newly constructed water gates at the entrance to the Rotterdam harbor, the final stage of a series of dams constructed to prevent a reoccurrence of the tragic flooding of 1953.

This conference was held in the attractive setting of a former Jesuit seminary in Hoeven, in the southern part of the Netherlands. And as can be expected in that country, it was very well organized. Both accommodations and food were excellent. For us, however, a definite highlight was the opportunity to meet people from all over the world, from many countries where we have stayed and worked: from student days in Amsterdam; from Terrace, B.C., where Adrian ministered for several years; from the Philippines, both Bacolod City and Manila; from the United States, especially Grand Rapids and Sioux Center; from England, Canada, and even from Russia. We really appreciated meeting Joy Vingno, a Filipino delegate who was once a student in Adrian's course on Christian philosophy. This truly meant a 'homecoming' for us.

Solovyov and Christian Platonism

All too quickly this conference ended, and we left for Moscow, where we had hardly a moment to unpack before attending the next conference devoted to "Vladimir S. Solovyov and his Legacy." The occasion was the 100th anniversary of the death of Russia's first and greatest systematic philosopher. The conference was organized by the Institute of Philosophy of the Russia Academy of Sciences and the International Solovyov Society (USA based), which also helped to sponsor a Solovyov conference that we attended two years ago, at the Catholic university of Nymegen, the Neth. That was 1998, just after the disastrous crash of the Russian ruble, making attendance of Russian participants very difficult. The present conference certainly compensated for that.

REUTERS/SERGEI KARPUKHIN

The conference in Moscow was overshadowed by the burning of Moscow's main transmission tower, Ostankino (above).

Ninety percent of the papers presented were in Russian, and only the English presentations were translated into Russian, not the other way around. Even some foreign participants chose to present their papers in Russian. It meant a baptism by fire (a linguistic one!) for us. But if we could not follow everything that was said, we understood enough to appreciate the controversial issues which were addressed. Lively discussion centered on the legacy of Sophiology and Christian Platonism, as well as ecumenism, topics on which we both gave presentations at the previous Solovyov conference as well. Our papers took us to the heart of issues of interest and controversy here.

The workshop sessions focused on three main areas: the work of V.S. Solovyov and Russian culture, his social and political philosophy, and his theoretical and practical philosophy. The depth and quality of the introductory lecture by Sergei Choruzhy on "Solovyov's Legacy After One Hundred Years" set the tone for the conference, and was acclaimed by many as the best of the presentations.

Quite unlike the celebration of human achievements in engineering and technology in the Netherlands, the conference in Moscow was overshadowed by the tragic disaster of Russia's finest submarine, the Kursk, and the burning of Moscow's main transmission tower, Ostankino, which is the second highest in the world, after Toronto's CN tower.

An excursion took us to the heart of Moscow, where Solovyov's family lived and worked a century ago. We also visited the site of Solovyov's grave, where an Orthodox priest conducted a memorial service. The conclusion of the conference took us to the southern part of Moscow, the estate of the Trubetskoy's, once a wealthy family. In their house Solovyov spent the last days before his death. Today it is a retreat centre for academics, and the grounds are an enormous public park. Here, very appropriately, we were treated to a final banquet.

Astounding contrast

The contrast between the two conferences astounded us. One seemed to glorify Dutch technology, though this was not the intention of that conference. The other was more subdued and spiritual in comparison. Organization in Moscow certainly did leave something to be desired. Expenses for the conference were kept to an absolute minimum, since accommodation and meals were not provided. Fortunately, we have our own apartment here, and numerous cafes and restaurants in the vicinity served fast food, Russian style. Name tags were nonexistent, and in the absence of chairpersons for many sessions, many speakers regularly went well beyond the time limit, leaving succeeding presenters little time for their remarks. It may be symbolic that, in Moscow, shortage of time typically meant shorter meal and snack breaks, while in Hoeven the workshops usually suffered because of long plenary discussions.

All in all, we are thankful that we could be involved and actively participate in these two conferences. At both we appreciated especially the opportunity for interaction with friends, acquaintances and colleagues. In the Netherlands we met with numerous colleagues, some of whom we had not seen for years; in Russia, on the other hand, our colleagues are so busy with multiple jobs in order to stay alive, that we treasure the opportunities to meet them at such conferences. One can hardly think of a more stimulating introduction to the new academic year.

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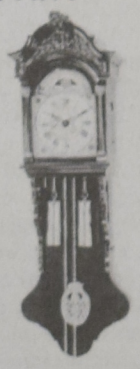

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Internuts

I'm going Internuts. This Dot Com stuff is driving me crazy.

For fear of sounding like some middle-aged Dutch guy sitting in his hempie and pish-poshing any form of post-1950 technology while plunging yet another spoon into his gristly bowl of porridge, let me explain.

I like to surf the 'Net like anybody else. It's hard to tear me away from it sometimes. But it seems that the Internet was full of enough trivial, meaningless information before it ever became an integral part of sports broadcasting. Now that the TV networks have their paws all over it, it's become a circus.

Instant Internet voting

Take last Sunday. Tennessee was playing Buffalo in an afternoon NFL game. At one point, one of the receivers for Buffalo went out for a pass and seemingly caught a poorly thrown ball. You couldn't tell if the ball had hit his hand or the ground first before he bobbled it for a while and got a hold of it for a first down. They went immediately to an instant replay.

In the meantime, this was a chance for the network to take a poll of the viewing audience. Was it a catch or was it incomplete? The play-by-play announcer urged us at home to log onto www.cbssports.com (or something like that) and cast our vote on the play. A minute or so later, the results came out 75 per cent in favor of an incomplete pass. A few minutes after that, we were reminded as well to cast our vote on a controversial play called the "Music City Miracle" from a week before.

I'm not sure what's more amazing — the amount of fan response to this opportunity or the asinine dumbness of it. I can just see some 350-pound guy with three cans of Coors balanced on his gut running over to the computer, kicking over a bowl of pretzels on the way, and gingerly clicking his way to the website to get his vote in.

Closest thing to a community for some

Bizarre. Who cares what the audience thinks about the play? Obviously some people do. I have a couple guesses as to why people actually go for this business. First of all, I think it has to do with detachment. We haven't felt (let alone talked about) a sense of community in our culture since the '60s. A lot of us live in neighborhoods where getting to know the person next door makes us some kind of perverted freak. By logging onto a website to cast their vote on a catch, maybe some people feel like they're part of something. Their little click on the icon has an effect on an end result. Wow! Such empowerment and harmony. Makes you want to break into a chorus of "Kum-Ba-Yah."

Without Christ and the body of believers, people may be finding that the Internet is the closest thing to community they can find. Chat rooms, on-line voting, and all.

It's obvious that people also like the sheer technological novelty of this kind of stuff. Voting on-line for a football play is an amazing, lightning quick use of technology. It makes you feel sophisticated and progressive. It's probably a bit exhilarating, like when they came out with the Chia Pet.

I wish they had continued with the experiment they tried several years ago. One of the networks showed an NFL game with no commentary, no analysis, and no pop-up ads. It was glorious. Of course, there was one drawback. When a group of people were watching the game, they had to rely on a show of hands around the room to decide if a catch was good or not.

Tim Antonides teaches Grade 8 and is a basketball coach at Surrey Christian School in Surrey, B.C.

Canadian Christian Olympian shows perseverance

Annette Wierstra

If Canadian Olympian David Daniels has one thing, it's perseverance. It has been a long journey for the 29-year-old basketball player to get to the Olympics.

For Daniels the journey started almost before he remembers. His dad, a high school basketball coach in Ft. Nelson B.C., taught him to play. "I can remember making my first basket when I was four," he says. By the time Daniels reached junior and senior high school it was natural that basketball was part of the drill.

"My identity became very much wrapped up in basketball. Everyone knew me as 'David Daniels the basketball player.' " he says. "It was pretty much all I thought of and my dream was to play in the NBA."

Something still missing

For a while it looked like all the pieces of the puzzle were falling into place. In 1993 Daniels tried out with the Denver Nuggets and he played in the NBA summer league. But with his dreams almost in reach, Daniels realized something was still missing from his life.

"It was an exciting time," he recalls, "but God really used it to show me that just reaching my dreams and my goal in basketball wasn't really dealing with the emptiness and the void that I had inside of me."

Daniels, raised in a Christian home, wasn't a Christian himself. He was held back partly because he assumed that accepting Christ meant an end to basketball. "My biggest fear was that my life would be over," admits Daniels, "that I'd miss out on all the good things life had to offer."

In October 1994 that changed. Daniels decided to let God fill the void in his life. "I turned my life to him and Jesus Christ became the God of my life instead of basketball," he says.

New perspective of game

It didn't mean the end of basketball, but Daniels' perspective of the game changed. "Before," says Daniels, "my motivation for playing was all for myself, so that I could reach my goal, so that people would know who I was, so that I would make money, for the respect and the fame."

Daniels quickly discovered that all his success didn't make him any happier or more content. "I now play for God. I tell him I'm thankful for my athletic abilities, thankful for my health and that I'm able to run and walk. So that's really changed my whole perspective towards life and towards basketball," he says.

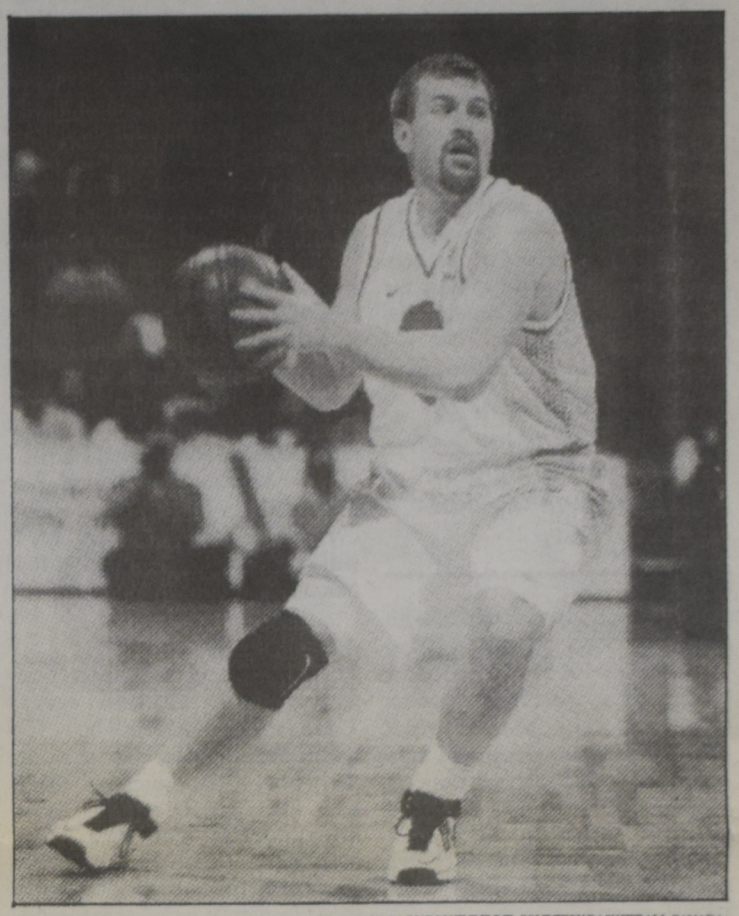


PHOTO BY RON TURENNE, COURTESY BASKETBALL CANADA

Canadian Olympian David Daniels in action on the basketball court.

The journey wasn't over yet, however. While Daniels didn't make the NBA team, he continued to play ball. He tried out for the Canadian national team for the first time in 1993, but in 1994-1997 he was cut from the team. In 1997 Daniels was part of the Canadian student team that won the silver medal at the World University games and he played in the Continental Basketball Association for a year.

In 1998 Daniels made the national team that went to the world championships but was cut again in 1999 due to injury. This year he's competing in the Olympics in Sydney, Australia.

It hasn't been easy for Daniels. "I've been cut five times from the national team but the Lord has definitely given me the persistence to stay with it," he says. "I've had a lot of people say, 'It's been really good to see you stay with it and be persistent and finally be rewarded.' And I know that all the glory for that goes to the Lord because on my own I wouldn't have been able to continue."

A dream come true

To be part of the Olympic team is a dream come true for Daniels. "It's an incredible feeling. It's probably the most exciting sporting event in the world.," he says. "I can remember watching the Olympics when I was six or seven for the first time — watching the opening ceremony thinking it would be so awesome some day to be able to do that."

Although Daniels has worked hard to compete in the Olympics, he has kept the Games in perspective. They are just one more step in the journey that God has planned for him.

"As exciting as it is and as great a goal as it is, I know that my joy and my happiness does not depend on whether I make the Olympics or not," Daniels says. "It's such a blessing but it's just one thing of life and my life goes on after this summer."

When Daniels thinks back to his belief that life as a Christian would be boring and restrictive, he's amazed. "In the last couple of weeks I have a renewed awareness of how much of a lie that was," he admits. "I really see that God has such great plans for me and that I just have to trust Him."

Opinion/News

So I'm a writer?

Ty Hofman

It is four a.m. and I can't sleep. I've slept on my right side since about midnight. So I roll over on my left side and can't find it. My mind is on other things. One of them is the offer of the Editor of C.C. to write a monthly column. He'd like to have an "expatriate" insight to help keep C.C. readers informed and sensitive to how we look at the issues here south of the border.

I can just imagine the Queen reading my book late into the night, so engrossed she couldn't sleep.

We don't always agree with Canadian views on what's going on in the US. I'd likely qualify for rendering a corrective opinion since I've survived about 40 years of political propaganda and spin here at home and have developed a nose for what cannot be described adequately with any term other than plain old b.s. Besides, I'm a dual citizen, a status in which I take some pride.

I tentatively turned him down but said I would keep it in mind.

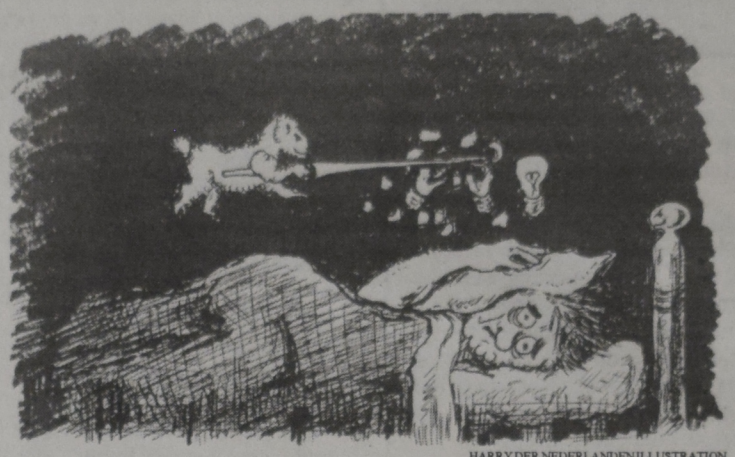
Who needs deadlines?

The more I look the more interesting things I see to write about, especially with the US elections just around the corner. So I'm thinking about being a "writer." I like to write, but at my age who needs deadlines? Had enough of them in my life. Every Saturday night for over 36 years with two sermons on the ready. But one deadline a month is not so heavy, I'm telling myself in the darkness. And I have few other commitments to encumber my life. Wait till morning.

Then I reflect on the irony of my even considering to be a writer. In school I detested literature and composition classes. Grammar was a bit better, since I liked the logic of putting the right words in the right order. It was closer to the arithmetic and science that I ate up. "Oral composition" was a nightmare for me. No one would ever have guessed that years later I would be accused of making too many speeches at synod.

A writer by necessity

By becoming a minister I of necessity also became a writer. There may be ministers who never write anything, who operate along the lines of the storefront cleric who, when asked about the secret to his preaching, said, "First I reads myself full, then I thinks myself straight, I prays myself hot and then I just lets it go." There may be a few preachers today who could even leave out one or two of those steps and still "let it go." I was never one of them. I did my share of writing, not just of sermons but of articles in church papers, of committee reports and of news articles for churches. That makes me a writer of sorts.



HARRY DER NEDERLANDEN ILLUSTRATION

Queen Beatrix's copy of Ty's book

I happen to like history, and I once had the opportunity to research and write up the story of the first still-existing Dutch settlement in Canada, in Southern Alberta. The book was entitled *The Strength of Their Years*. Last month a couple from the Hague was steered in my direction. They wished to buy a copy of my book, which they had read in the Netherlands. How they had come upon it is an interesting story. They were employed in the Dutch archival system and knew the keeper of Queen Beatrix's personal library, so they had borrowed her copy for a few days. I can just imagine the Queen reading my book late into the night, so engrossed she couldn't sleep.

But the real reward from writing is the simple satisfaction that comes from putting down the story in black and white, being able to read it back to yourself and to feel the power of the inspiration that brought forth the ideas and the words in the first place.

This is especially so of a sermon produced in the power of the Holy Spirit. Writing it and preaching it is deeply satisfying. Not that the preacher gets that blessing every time he mounts the pulpit. I have preached my quota of punk sermons, when I had to produce without being able to take the proper time to become adequately inspired. But I also knew when the power of living words reached the ears of those who came to hear the Word himself. I still remember the somewhat simple but discerning soul who would take my hand and express her appreciation with, "Dominee, you were so... so full of it again this morning." That pretty well said it all.

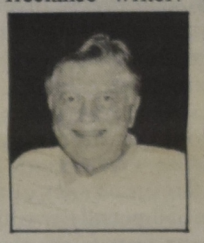
Our last, best hope

And as you may remember I've done some writing for C.C. If there is anything I can do to enhance the life and influence of C.C., I'll be right there to run with it. For I have a conviction that C.C. is our last best hope for a Reformed literary presence on the Canadian scene. That is a conviction that urgently needs to grow in the life of the next generation if C.C. is to survive in the competition for the interest and the mind of the Christian community.

Freelancer or old codger?

So, if the Editor likes this piece I may be back. But I wonder how he will designate me. Up till this time I'm always described as "a retired CRC minister living in Grand Rapids, Mich." That may carry the import that I am an honorable man, that I can be trusted not to mislead anyone, and that I likely know something about the church. But it might also imply that I'm an old codger, that you really can't expect anything new or relevant out of me and that I can therefore easily be written off as such.

Then I look at other writers in C.C. and often see them classified as "a freelance writer." Now you will have to admit that there is something mighty intriguing about being "free lance." A lance is sharp and effective, to be given due respect by the adversary. And who doesn't like to be free? Put those two together and you have a mighty combination. That in itself could carry enough inspiration for at least a half year of articles. So I'm wondering, why can't I be a freelance writer? On the other hand, a rose by any other name would smell as sweet.



Ty Hofman is an Expatriate Yankee-Canuck.

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Redeemer College reports record enrolment

ANCASTER, Ont. — Redeemer University College released preliminary enrolment statistics Sept. 15 with a record 675 full-time and part-time students registered for the fall term. The Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) measurement of enrolment stands at 939. By comparison, the 1999 FTE totalled 576.

Official results will be released later. Redeemer President Dr. Justin Cooper is encouraged by these preliminary numbers. "These are certainly very satisfying for all of us," Cooper commented. "It demonstrates a growing interest in Christian university education and confirms that students value the excellent teaching and scholarship of our faculty."

Redeemer opened its doors in 1982, with 97 fulltime students.

New Canadian Ministries Director nominated

BURLINGTON, Ont. — The Christian Reformed Church will soon have a new Canadian Ministries Director, according to Henry Hess, the CRC's communications director.

Dr. Peter Borgdorff, Executive Director of Ministries for the CRC, announced recently, "I am pleased to inform you that the search committee for the Canadian Ministries Director has selected the Rev. William C. Veenstra of Maple Ridge, B.C., as the single nominee for the position. Rev. Veenstra will be presented to the Board of Trustees (BOT) when it meets on Sept. 27, 2000. The BOT-Canada will interview Rev. Veenstra with a view toward appointment. The BOT-binational will be requested to ratify the appointment of BOT-Canada when such has been made."

If appointed, Veenstra will assume the position Jan. 1, 2001.

Nose for News

Bert Hielema

WELL, THERE IS A PERFECT CHURCH after all. The Vatican says so and when the Bishop of Rome speaks, we must pay attention. "The redemption and salvation of sinners is possible only through the Roman Catholic Church. Other Christian communities (such as Anglicans, Presbyterians, Christian Reformed) are not churches in the proper sense," so said Congregational secretary Archbishop Tarcisio Bertone at a press conference; " the doctrine on which the declaration is based is 'infallible' and therefore immune from liability to error."

The recently released 28 page document, entitled *On the Unity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church* also claims that "the Christian faithful are not permitted to imagine that the Church of Christ is nothing more than a collection — divided, yet in some way one — of churches and ecclesiastical communities. There is a single Church of Christ, which subsists in the Catholic Church, governed by the Successor of Peter (the Pope) and by the Bishops in communion with him."

It seems to me that the Roman Catholic Church is going back in time. Almost 40 years ago there was a real spirit of renewal in the Mother Church. Vatican II breathed new life in the body of believers worldwide. In Roman Catholic churches around the world local congregations did away with communion rails and the priests were told to interpret the Gospel as a call to social action. A new breed of clerics fought for integration and school decentralization, built housing for the poor, spoke out on issues such as nuclear disarmament and the Vietnam War.

Vatican II, the brainchild of Pope John XXIII gave lay people a role in running parishes, replaced the Latin Mass with local languages and gave the clergy a voice in church matters. This almost revolutionary three-year-long church assembly identified social justice as an integral part of the church's mission and reversed the church's age-old insistence that Jews were responsible for the death of Jesus. The church then said that Catholicism did not represent the only path to salvation, a radical statement. It seemed that Women Priests and Married Clergy would not be far away.

NOW, ALL THIS HAS changed. Radically. In his old age the Polish Pope seems to be falling back on his very orthodox roots, nurtured during the decades of isolation in the Soviet years. I remember how, about 10 years ago, in our village a young Polish priest refused to be part of the ministerial and, in his broken English, harassed Catholic parents whose kids attended our vacation Bible school. John Paul II has this same unprogressive streak and has selected cardinals — who will soon choose the next pope — from among the most conservative priests. The beatification of new heroes of the faith has also triggered unease as Pope Pius IX, who ordered Jews confined to Rome's ghetto and had a Jewish child abducted to be raised as a Catholic, has been launched on the road to sainthood.

WHY THIS SUDDEN retrenching? I think part of the answer lies in the absence of maturity on the part of both priests and laity. The people in the pew are growing older, but their insight and knowledge and religious fervor are waning, basically because the church doesn't trust its members — as it did 35 years ago — and is now unsure of itself. So the advice of the old cardinals to an even older pope is: stick to the old and proven; play it safe.

Joanna Manning, in a recent article in the *Globe and Mail*, makes the following observation: "... The exclusive rights of denominational Roman Catholic schools in Ontario have recently been singled out for criticism at the UN Human Rights Committee. The United Nations body ruled last November that tax funding should go to all religious schools in the province or to none. If students in Catholic schools are now to be taught in obedience to Rome that all other denominations and faiths are false, how long will taxpayers in multicultural Ontario be willing to foot the bill for such divisive religious instruction?"

"GIVE ME OIL IN MY LAMP. Keep me burning. Give me oil in my lamp, I pray." This is fine and dandy, but the oil in my lamp is getting more and more expensive. A few weeks ago, 160 heads of states crowded into the UN building in New York, where each of them had the crews of their national television focus on them for five minutes, the time limit imposed on each of them, including garrulous Bill Clinton and Fidel Castro. All were there to solve the world's problems, of which poverty and AIDS are the greatest.

They made solemn pledges, something politicians are good at. They hope that more economic growth will do the trick, fueled, of course, by cheap oil, the cheaper the better. So, for once, all the world's politicians sang in harmony: "Give us oil in our tank, keep us going," and they sang hosanna to the Arab Kings, who graciously assented to open the tap a little wider.

However, the problem is not the tap. The problem is the pipelines and tankers. They are filled to capacity and more production will cause back-ups in the supply mechanism. Two years ago oil prices were below $10 (US) a barrel. Then three things happened: (1) Asia's economy recovered and needed more oil, but (2) low prices had made it unprofitable to invest in new oil exploration and infrastructure, such as pipelines, and (3) OPEC got its act together, when its members agreed to cut production and, for the first time, stuck to the agreed quotas. So the price shot up, causing lots of discontent, especially in Europe.

The Government of France capitulated when truck drivers and farmers blocked access to refineries. The problem in Europe is aggravated by the slide of the Euro. Oil is priced in American dollars and the Euro has lost 27 per cent of its value since its introduction about two years ago. In Dutch guilders, a barrel of oil increased from about fl.20 to now about fl.100, while in North America the increase was only threefold.

This time, high fuel prices are not as inflationary as before. Most economists say that the West is much more a service-based economy and uses about half the oil to produce a given amount of gross domestic product compared to the 1970s. Still, oil oils the world.

According to Professor Colin Campbell, a distinguished geologist, the world has been living in a fool's paradise. At the start of this year he wrote an article predicting this year's oil shock. In the longer term he is even more gloomy. In five years world oil output will peak, he said, and in 10 years the West will rely on OPEC for 50 per cent of its oil. "The truth is that there is virtually no spare oil capacity in the world today," he said, "and in the markets that dreadful perception has begun to sink in. There is, of course, a huge amount that can be done in terms of energy savings. But it implies some fundamental discontinuities in the way the world lives."

As always we live in interesting times.

THE NOVEMBER ELECTION in the U.S.A. is getting closer and soon we will be able to watch the debates between the two presidential contenders. Apparently, Gore is a real sharp debater, with a photographic memory for facts, faces and figures. Bush, so they say, has a weakness there, and by giving the appearance that he is unwilling to confront Albert Gore on TV, has lost some general appeal.

In Canada election talk is becoming more focused too. Tax cuts are promised by all political parties on both sides of the 49th parallel. We all know that the rich are getting richer and the poor poorer. Tax cuts will make this even more lopsided, as the rich will benefit most. In Canada, people making over $60,000 pay the highest tax rate, and, although those who make between $60,000 and $100,000 account for only nine per cent of all taxpayers they received 17.6 per cent of all income and paid 21.5 per cent of all income taxes. If you are among the 2.7 per cent who make over $100,000, your group took in 15.3 per cent of all income and paid 24.5 per cent of all taxes.

STOCKWELL DAY. HE arrived at a press conference on a personal watercraft, which, in seven hours of use produces as much pollution as a new car driven 160,000 km, according to the US Department of Environmental Conservation. It has no redemptive features other than skimming fast over water, imperiling boaters and swimmers in the process and causing more ozone depletion, more asthma attacks, and more greenhouse gases. That the new Alliance leader, who practised a good number of hours to make a perfect landing, chose such a show-off, macho machine to introduce himself to Canadians as the newly elected member of Parliament is very revealing. It shows a callous disregard for the well-being of his fellow citizens, whom he professes to love, and a blatant indifference to clean air and pure water.

He reminds me of James Watt, a fellow Pentecostal and Ronald Reagan's Secretary of the Interior (The U.S.A's equivalent to Canada's Minister of the Environment): he opposed conservation because, as he explained to the nation, this world will pass away within a generation or two. Stockwell Day, by this action, has speeded up the death of nature by another notch. Contrast this with Martin Luther, who said that even if the Lord comes back tomorrow, I will still plant a tree today.

Bert Hielema lives in Tweed, Ont, where he is the editor of the Ceilidh, the monthly newsmagazine of his church.

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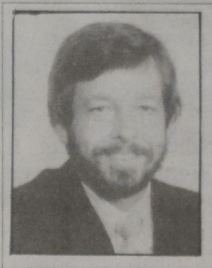

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Christian Courier is published on alternate Mondays. Copy deadline for each issue is 8:30 a.m. Tuesday, nine business days prior to publication.

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All personal and family announcements: $16.00 per column inch (pci) + GST (columns are two inches wide). Display advertising re.: businesses and organizations: minimum $18.20 pci + GST, depending on design and frequency.

PHOTOS

There is a processing fee of $25 for the inclusion of a photograph with a personal or family announcement. Photo space is not charged pci, but we reserve the right to determine published photo size. Please note that we cannot use a faxed photo. We need either an original (which we will return) or a downloadable Internet image.

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Christian Courier would be pleased to handle your personal ad in an efficient and discreet manner. The cost to set up a personal file under a unique file number is $35. Ads requesting correspondence with this file are run at $16 pci per insertion. All correspondence is immediately forwarded unopened.

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We offer a $25 one-year subscription to couples whose wedding is announced in *Christian Courier* and to parents who announce the birth of a child in our paper. Please let us know when placing your ad that you want to take advantage of this offer.

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mail: *Christian Courier*
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St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1
fax: 905-682-8313
email: ccadpromo@aol.com

OTHER INFORMATION

a) *Christian Courier* reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format. And editing style.
b) Please provide us with clear copy. *Christian Courier* is not responsible for any errors due to hand written or phoned-in advertisements.

Celebration

"Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise."

We, Harry and Joanne Boessenkool, thank the Lord for three new additions to our family.
Our son,

RANDALL MARK
and
LYNNETTE JOY,

daughter of Ray and Jane Posthuma, Winnipeg, Man., were married on August 25, 2000.
Two new granddaughters:

ASHLEY JEAN,

6 lb. 13 oz., was born on June 15 to Ken and Tammy Boessenkool (nee McLeod), Airdrie, Alta. Sisters: Courtney and Janelle.

ANNA DOROTHEA,

7 lb. 1 oz., was born on August 27. First child for Jeff and Dorothy Boessenkool (nee VanSteenbergen), Surrey, B.C.
Contact address:
Harry and Joanne Boessenkool
15846 - 101 A Ave.,
Surrey BC V4N 2G1

Wedding

BOOMSMA-WOUDSTRA

"For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations."
(Ps. 100:5)

With joy and praise to God, we celebrate the marriage of

ANITA ELAINE

daughter of
Martin and Helen Boomsma
and
LEO

son of Fred and Theresa Woudstra on Friday, October 6, 2000, D.V., at 6 p.m. in the Christian Reformed Church, Georgetown, Ont.
Pastor Mark Verbruggen officiating.
Future address: 60 Corey Circle, Georgetown ON L7G 5L7

Birthday

It is with joy and thankfulness that we can celebrate the 80th birthday of our mother and grandmother,

ANJE BUS
(nee HAVINGA)

on October 3, 2000.
We are thankful to the Lord for the years He has given Mom and for the blessing she has been to us. May God continue to grant His sustaining love in the years to come.
With love, your children and grandchildren.
Her address: 20181 Grade Crescent. Langley, BC V3A 4J5

Anniversaries

Congratulations to Cor and Tina Bos on their 50th wedding anniversary.

St. Catharines Fenwick
Ont. Ont.
1950 October 8 2000

"But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (Joshua 24:15b)
The children and grandchildren of

COR and TINA BOS
(nee BAKKER)

rejoice with Mom and Dad, Gramma and Grampa on their 50th wedding anniversary.
Congratulations, Mom and Dad, on this wonderful occasion. Thanks for all you have done for us and for all you mean to us. May God continue to bless you as you continue to be a blessing to those around you.

Anniversaries

Congratulations to Dick & Nell Diepeveen on their 50th wedding anniversary.

Den Haag Abbotsford
the Neth. B.C.
1950 October 11 2000

With joy and thanksgiving to the Lord, we announce the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents,

DICK and NELL DIEPEVEEN
(nee SPAANS)

May God continue to bless and guide you.
With all our love:
Bill & Winnie – Edmonton
Nellie - Victoria
Elisabeth & John – Surrey
Len & Susan – Halifax
Twelve grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.
Home address: 28-2938 Trafalgar St, Abbotsford BC V2S 7X5

1960 October 15 2000

"For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." (Eph. 5:31)
"And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, all arrayed like a bride beautified and adorned for her husband." (Revelation 21:2)
We the children and grandchildren of

SIEP and DINI HOITING,

thank the Lord that we are able to celebrate our parents' 40th wedding anniversary.
We will have an Open House from 1-3 p.m. at Maranatha Christian Reformed Church, Woodstock, Ont. (corner of Hwy. 59 & 401) on October 21, 2000.
Congratulations, Mom and Dad, Grandpa and Grandma.
Love,
Yvonne Geurkink
Rob & Yvonne Hoiting
Rick & Annette Hoiting
Debbie Hoiting
and all your grandchildren!
Best wishes only, please!

Thank You

We have been overwhelmed by many cards, letters and visits on the occasion of our 50th wedding and ordination anniversaries. We heard from long lost friends. We thank you for your expressions of friendship, love and appreciation. Glory be to God alone!
Ada and Martin Geleynse

Church News

Christian Reformed Church:

New phone number:
Rev. John Kerssies, Collingwood, Ont.: 705-444-0088.

Anniversaries

Zaandam, N.H. Lacombe,
the Neth. Alta.
1950 October 25 2000

With grateful thanks to God, who has kept them in His care and blessed us with their love, we hope to celebrate the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents

TED and ALICE KRAAY
(nee WOLDHUIS)

We thank God for the time He has given our parents together. We pray that God will continue to use them as a blessing to those around them.
Irene Kraay – Burnaby, B.C.
Agnes & Harv Prins – Lacombe, Alta.
Cindy, Steve, Keith, Brian
Ed & Linda Kraay – Lacombe, Alta.
Jesse, Reuben, Matthew, Amanda
Janet & Phil Ryskamp – Calgary, Alta.
Michelle, Tim, Daniel
Wilma & Gord Spelt – Lacombe, Alta.
Randy, Jason, Becky
Home address: 4814 55th Ave., Lacombe AB T4L 1T7

Best wishes to Charles & Elsie Triemstra on their 40th wedding anniversary.

40th Anniversary
1960 September 30 2000

CHARLES and ELSIE TRIEMSTRA
(nee SLAGER)

Wedding text: "But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."
(Joshua 24:15)

We are thankful for all God's blessings on the 40 years of married life you have shared together. May God continue to bless you in the years to come.
We love you!
Terry & Patricia Triemstra
Jessica, Tanya, Kristy, Charles
Perry & Wendy Triemstra
Taylor, Vanessa
Charles & Deb Triemstra
Janine, Kim, Jake, Sam
Maribeth & Bert Witteveen
Jacqueline, Jerry, Janna, Jon
Beverly & John Faber
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Tai
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Two-bedroom, M/H in Adult Marina Park, close to Cypress Gardens, Disney. Fully furnished, screen room, A/C. Nov., Dec. $500 US/month inclusive. E-mail: wvos@home.com; phone **613-542-8271; 613-546-3352.**

Brampton Cambridge
1975 October 11 2000

ANDY and ANNE VANDER PLOEG
(nee VOOGD)

along with their children, Mike, Dan, Melinda and Jennifer, hope to celebrate their

25th Anniversary

with an Open House at Cambridge Christian School, 229 Myers Rd., Cambridge, Ont., on October 14 from 2-4 p.m.
We invite all family and friends to join us as we celebrate and give thanks to God for His gifts of love and life.
Best wishes only, please.
Address: 12 Southview Cres., Cambridge ON N1P 1A1

Obituaries

Vorden, Gld. Jarvis,
the Neth. Ont.
Sept. 24, 1937 - Sept. 3, 2000

"I am the resurrection and the life."

BERTHA (BERTHIE) PRINZEN
(nee JANSEN)

On the day of rest, the Lord called our dear wife, mother and grandmother into eternal rest.
Beloved wife of Hein for 37 years.
Loving mother and grandmother of:
Jo-Anne & Chris Teeuwsen –
St. Catharines, Ont.
Rebecca, Michael, Trevor, Daniel
Gerdy & Pete Scharringa – Goderich, Ont.
Peter, Derek, Jason, Nathan
George Prinzen – Toronto, Ont.
Predeceased by infant son, Glen.
Also remembered by Hanna Prinzen, Dick & Annie Prinzen, Hanny & Albert Middendorp, all of the Netherlands.
Correspondence address: Hein Prinzen, RR 1, Jarvis ON N0A 1J0

CORNELIA JACOBA STAMMIS
(nee BOUMAN)

Haarlemmermeer, Brampton,
the Neth Ont.
Aug. 3, 1909 - Sept. 11, 2000

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." (I Peter 1:3)
Suffering from many disabilities, Cornelia longed to be with her Lord and Savior.
She will be sadly missed by her children:
Gerrie Griffioen & the late Bill – Lindsay, Ont.
Evelyn Stammis & the late Kees – Peterborough, Ont.
Nel Van Abbema & the late Dirk – Bowmanville, Ont.
Martin Stammis – Campbellcroft, Ont.
John & Martha Stammis – Aurora, Ont.
Grandchildren and great-grandchildren.
Correspondence address:
42 Batson Dr., Aurora ON L4G 7G9

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Clinton and District Christian School, Box 658
Clinton ON N0M 1L0
phone: 519-482-7851
fax: 519-482-7448
e-mail: cdcs @tcc.on.ca

Event

Come join the celebration!

ORANGEVILLE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

50TH ANNIVERSARY

Saturday, November 4	**Sunday, November 5**
Open House: 2 - 5 p.m. Dinner: 6 p.m. Cost is $25.	Anniversary Service 10 a.m.

For info or dinner reservations contact Jeannie DeVogel at 519-941-7791 or e-mail: devogel@hurontario.net or Rita Vander Veen at 519-942-9674

Job Opportunities

REDEEMER University College

Vice-President (Academic)

Applications are invited for this renewable five-year appointment which begins July 1, 2001.

As the chief academic officer of the college, this person reports to the President and is responsible for the faculty, academic program, library and research centres of this vibrant undergraduate institution.

Candidates should have appropriate scholarly and administrative experience and be able to provide academic leadership which demonstrates a commitment to the reformed Christian basis of the Redeemer University College.

Applications should include a curriculum vitae, a two or three page statement outlining a vision for reformed Christian liberal arts and science university education, and three references. Applications should be submitted before November 30, 2000, to:

Dr. Justin D. Cooper, President
777 Garner Road E., Ancaster, ON L9K 1J4
Tel: (905) 648-2131, Fax:(905)648-2134,
cooper@redeemer.on.ca

In accordance with Canadian immigration requirements, this advertisement is directed to Canadian citizens and permanent residents.

Event

REDEEMER University College

Is pleased to announce the
Annual General Meeting and Luncheon.
We also invite the public to join us for the
Dedication Ceremony of the New Residence.

Both events will be taking place on
Saturday, October 14,
beginning at 12:00 noon with the
General Meeting and Luncheon
Following the meeting you are invited to tour the new residence between 1:00 - 2:00 p.m. and attend the New Residence Dedication at 2:30 p.m.

If you plan to attend or would like more information, please call (905) 648-2131 ext. 4208.

777 Garner Road East, Ancaster, ON L9K 1J4 - www.redeemer.on.ca

Teachers

LETHBRIDGE, Alta.:
Senior High French/Social Studies ½ time opening effective **January 30, 2001**, at **Immanuel Christian High School, Lethbridge, Alta.** Contact:

Ed DeYoung
403-328-4783
eddeyoung@hotmail.com

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Please address all inquiries to:
Search Committee
First CRC of Toronto
c/o Tine Houtman
45 Harriet Street
Toronto ON M4L 2G1
fax: 416-465-6367, or you can phone: 416-461-1207.

All responses will be held in confidence.

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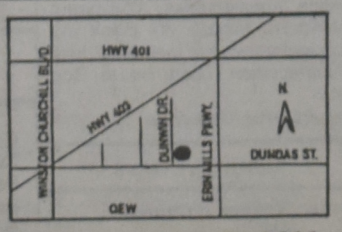

Mississauga, Dundas St. — 2 Blocks W. of Erin Mills Parkway (905) 828-9511

Event

Come join us for our

50th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS
Fruitland Christian Reformed Church
Stoney Creek, Ontario

Friday, October 20, 2000	**Sunday, October 22, 2000**
Anniversary Program & Dessert Social **7 p.m.**	Special Anniversary Services conducted by former pastors. **9:30 a.m. & 6 p.m.**

For more information call 905-945-7701.

Consider placing a Personal Ad. $16.00/column inch per insertion. One time set-up fee is $35.00 for a box number. GST is extra..

CARROT TASTE TIP

(NC)—Add a sprinkle of brown sugar, orange juice, nutmeg and cinnamon to steamed or lightly boiled, drained carrots.

- News Canada

Classifieds

Job Opportunities

TIMOTHY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
BARRIE, ONTARIO
seeks a full-time
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We are looking for a progressive, faith-filled motivator who loves the Lord and has a passion for Christian Education. Timothy Christian School is a thriving school with 250 students, 17 teachers and a strong interdenominational flavour.

Please direct inquiries, resume, statement of faith and philosophy of education to:

Jake Veenstra
2284 Highway 26
Minesing ON L0L 1Y0
phone: 705-722-8179
e-mail: jveenstra@city.barrie.on.ca

Application deadline: November 1, 2000
While all qualified candidates will be considered, preference will be given to those with experience.

"Equipping children to love, serve and honour the Lord through a sound, Christ-centred education."

Job Opportunities

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The King's University College

Faculty Position Openings

THEOLOGY
This position involves teaching a range of courses in biblical and theological studies. The successful applicant will show promise of exploring the relationships between biblical/ theological studies and some of the contemporary philosophical, social, cultural and scientific issues addressed in a small university that emphasizes interdisciplinarity. Ability to teach world religions is an asset. The successful candidate will embrace and teach out of the historic Christian faith affirmed in the College's statements of faith and mission, and be conversant with and sympathetic to the Reformed tradition of Christian scholarship that shapes the history and identity of the College. Application Deadline: January 15, 2001.

BUSINESS
The successful candidate will be broadly trained, preferably have some practical exposure to business, and be able to offer a range of courses in the field of business and entrepreneurship in a Christian liberal arts university college. These are the initial full-time, tenure-track appointments in a new, four-year Bachelor of Commerce program. The successful candidate, together with current faculty, will play a leading role in developing the program to generate a Christian approach to business that merges economic prosperity, social justice and environmental sustainability. The practical focus of the program will be to train graduates in general business skills, emphasising (1) entrepreneurship in small and medium-sized enterprises, (2) the possibilities of information and communication technology, and (3) international business. The successful candidate will be committed to a faith-based and interdisciplinary approach to education. Application Deadline: January 31, 2001.

COMPUTING SCIENCE
The successful candidate should be broadly trained and able to offer a range of courses in computing science in the context of a Christian approach to liberal arts and science university education. This second, full-time appointment in the discipline will contribute to developing a new, four-year major in computing science that fosters a reflective approach to the social, economic, political, and ethical context of computing and information technology. Graduates of the program will not only have computing skills but will also have expertise in another discipline where they can apply their computing skills. This person will share the responsibility with the present faculty member appointed in 2000, and with existing staff in mathematics and statistics, to prepare curriculum and deliver courses across a range of subjects in the discipline. The successful candidate will be committed to an interdisciplinary approach to education and research in a robust and growing science division. Application Deadline: December 31, 2000.

Successful candidates must demonstrate graduate level course work in areas of teaching. Ph.D. is required for tenure track appointment as well as commitment to the College's Christian Statement of Faith. Starting date: July 1, 2001.

Starting salary: $38,000 and up with generous benefit package. Send application letter, curriculum vitae, copies of transcripts, and three letters of reference to:

Dr. S. Keith Ward, Vice President Academic
The King's University College
9125 - 50 St., Edmonton AB T6B 2H3
phone: 780-465-8304; fax: 780-465-3534
e-mail: skward@kingsu.ab.ca; web: www.kingsu.ab.ca

CALVIN COLLEGE

The Calvin College Education Department is re-opening the search for candidates for a **tenure-track position starting in August 2001**. The position primarily involves teaching reading and reading across the curriculum at the undergraduate and graduate level. It is expected that all full-time faculty assume responsibilities for academic advising, curriculum development, committee service, and research and professional scholarship.

Qualifications include: 1) an earned doctorate (or ABD) in reading; 2) recent K-12 teaching and/or administration experience; 3) a scholarship agenda; and 4) commitment to a Reformed Christian expression of faith.

Calvin College is a Christian college within the Reformed tradition of historic Christianity and is an equal opportunity employer. The College encourages the application of women and minority candidates. Interested applicants should forward a letter stating qualifications and curriculum vitae to:

Dr. L. Stegink
Department Chair, Education Department
Calvin College
3201 Burton Street SE
Grand Rapids MI 49546

Applications will be accepted until the position is filled.

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The Canadian Foodgrains Bank needs your donations of grain and cash to support community projects around the world. From planting trees in India to building irrigation dams in Ethiopia, your generosity gives people the strength to work toward self-sufficiency and renewed hope.

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Canadian Foodgrains Bank
A Christian Response to Hunger

Classifieds

Job Opportunities

North Hills Christian Reformed Church

in beautiful Troy, Michigan, is seeking a

PASTOR

We're a warm and open suburban congregation of 60 families in the dynamic Detroit metropolitan area. We seek a compassionate male or female who is effective as a preacher, who would be committed both to nurturing us spiritually and to equipping us for outreach, who has demonstrated skills in leadership and in interaction with youth. Please send inquiries or resumes to:

The Search Committee
c/o Anita Beem
29850 N. Bedford **phone: 248-559-2806**
Southfield MI 48076 **e-mail: Wbeem@aol.com**

SMITHERS CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

situated in a beautiful mountain valley of Northwest British Columbia is seeking a

Full-time
Youth Pastor/Director

Our young, growing congregation of 550 members requires an ordained or non-ordained youth leader who will give direction and leadership to our existing youth programs. Those who have a passion for this ministry and are committed to a Reformed perspective may direct their resume and/or inquiries to our pastor,

Rev. Jim Poelman
250-847-3452
e-mail: jpoelman@bulkley.net or:
Box 2257, Smithers BC V0J 2N0
Request a church profile by fax: 250-847-5710

Event

CLARKSON CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH
50TH ANNIVERSARY

We will celebrate, D.V.
"God's Faithfulness through all Generations"
on the following days:

Friday, October 20, at 7:30 p.m.
KEN MEDEMA CONCERT
Redeemer College

Saturday, October 28, at 7 p.m.
CELEBRATION EVENING
St. John's Hall, 2185 Stavebank Rd., Mississauga

Sunday, October 29, at 10 a.m.
WORSHIP CELEBRATION SERVICE
Clarkson Christian Reformed Church

All friends and former members are cordially invited to join us in our celebrations.

For more information about any of the events, please phone our church secretary, Elaine DeBolster at 905-823-7262 or e-mail her at mail@clarksoncrc.on.ca

Miscellaneous

The Bible and Islam

by Rev. Bassam Madany

(**$5.95** Canada/**$4.95** U.S.)
How to relate the gospel relevantly to the Muslim heart and mind.
Also available — essays on Understanding the Middle East ($1.50).
Write:
The Back to God Hour
P.O. Box 5070
Burlington, ON
L7R 3Y8

The Living Word
Sermons for reading services.
Contact:
CRC
R. Vander Ploeg, Secr./Treas.
37 Brick Pond Lane
Woodstock, ON N4V 1G1
Phone: (519) 539-2117

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REMEMBER WHEN?
SINGLES SOCIAL
Sat., Nov. 11, 2000
8 p.m. - 12 a.m.
Burlington Arts Centre
1333 Lakeshore Rd
Burlington, Ont.
Tickets are $15
(Available at door)
For more information, call:
Sandra at 905-388-7387
or Sue at 905-765-5543.
Please come dressed from your favourite era.

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Job Opportunities

DORDT COLLEGE

FACULTY POSITIONS

Dordt College is seeking applications for openings beginning 2001-2002 in the following areas:

Art
Fine arts; emphasis graphic design or art education

Communication (Two year position)
Mass communication; introductory speaking/listening

Education
Introduction, upper-level, and possibly graduate levels with emphasis on special education

Foreign Language
Spanish

Psychology
General/Applied

Social Work (Temporary positions with possibility for regular appointment)
Generalist; micro-practice background; methods courses & field practice
Generalist; macro-practice background; public policy, and/or research

Theatre Arts
Theatre generalist, theatre history emphasis

Evaluation of applications will continue until the positions are filled. To learn more about a position and receive application materials, qualified persons committed to a Reformed, biblical perspective and educational philosophy are encouraged to send a letter of interest and a curriculum vitae/resume to:

Dr. Rockne McCarthy **Facsimile: 712 722-4496**
Vice President for Academic Affairs **E-mail: vpaa@dordt.edu**
Dordt College **Web site:**
498 4th Avenue NE **www.dordt.edu/offices/acadaff**
Sioux Center, IA 51250-1697

Dordt College encourages the nominations and candidacies of women, minorities, and persons with disabilities.

Miscellaneous

CHRISTMAS FOOD PARCELS

Netherlands Bazaar is again preparing Christmas packages for needy families of Dutch descent in Ontario. If you know of such a family, **submit their name by November 15, 2000**, to surprise them with a food parcel at Christmas. Please supply the number of family members, the ages of the children and the reason they merit aid. Include the name and telephone number of a contact person who can verify the information.

Send letters to:
Committee Netherlands Bazaar
Attn: Mrs. G. Spaans
15 Pavilion St.
Unionville ON L3R 1N8
or call one of the committee members:
Ge Spaans 905-477-1243
Lia de Groot 905-878-1040
Bets Speelman 416-742-1172
Jannie Thomas 416-223-5026

Netherlands Bazaar raises money by holding huge Bazaars. Last year it distributed 420 parcels to needy families and sent 1000 disadvantaged children to summer camp.

Calendar of Events

Items appearing in this column are run free of charge if they advertise an admission-free event, if they accompany an ad for the same event, or at the discretion of CC. In case of free listing, space limitations apply. The charge otherwise is $7.50 per line, or $1.50 per 1/3 line, per insertion.

Oct. 2-6	Ontario Christian Higher Education Fair, visiting Christian High schools. See ad in Sept. 18 issue.
Oct. 7-8	Thanksgiving weekend 50th Anniversary celebrations, First CRC, **Toronto,** Ont. For more information, call 416-481-4912. See ad in this issue.
Oct. 7-8	First CRC of **Barrie,** Ont. 50th Anniversary celebrations. Thanksgiving dinner and program on Saturday, Services at 10:30 a.m. & 7 p.m. on Sunday. For more info, call 705-734-9166.
Oct. 7-9	Thanksgiving weekend 50th Anniversary celebrations, First CRC of **Rocky Mountain House,** Alta. For more information, call 403-845-6067.
Oct. 9-15	First CRC of **Abbotsford,** B.C. 50th Anniversary Celebrations. Call 604-859-5908. Ad in July 10 issue.
Oct. 11	The First CRC of Ladner, B.C. – 50th Anniversary Service – 8 p.m., **Delta,** B.C.
Oct. 14	Redeemer University College Annual Meeting & Luncheon, **Ancaster,** Ont. If you plan to attend or need more information, call 905-648-2131 ext. 4208. See ad in this issue.
Oct. 14-15	Essex CRC, 50th Anniversary; **Oct. 14:** Fellowship Supper 5:30 p.m.; **Oct. 15**: Service of Praise and Thanksgiving 10 a.m. **Essex**, Ont. See ad in Sept. 4 issue.
Oct. 19-Nov. 10	"The Dreaming of Lions: and the Last Shall Be First" by James Tughan on display at Redeemer Art Gallery, **Ancaster,** Ont. See Redeemer University College ad in this issue.
Oct. 20	Canadian Chr. Education Foundation, 25th Anniversary Celebrations at Hamilton Place, **Hamilton**, Ont., 7:30 p.m. (Doors open 6:30 p.m.) 1000 voice student mass choir, Andre Knevel, organist; Liselotte Fennema, panflutist; Laura Pin, pianist. Free admission, free-will offering. See ad this issue.
Oct. 20	"How then shall we lead?" Ancaster CRC, **Ancaster**, Ont. 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Special day for those in leadership roles in church. 12 workshops. See Diaconal Ministries ad in Sept. 4 issue.
Oct. 20	Ken Medema in concert. Redeemer College auditorium, **Ancaster,** Ont. 7:30 p.m. See Diaconal Ministries ad in Sept. 4 issue, or Clarkson CRC Anniversary ad in this issue.
Oct. 20-21	50th Anniversary Celebrations for Fruitland CRC, **Stoney Creek,** Ont. For more information, call 905-945-7701. See ad in this issue.
Oct. 21	Day of Encouragement and training, Hamilton District Chr.High School, **Ancaster,** Ont. Call Diaconal Ministries at 1-800-730-3490. See ad in Sept. 4 issue.
Oct. 21	York Music Fest, 7:30 p.m. at Maranatha CRC, King St., **York,** Ont. For ticket info call: Louis at 905-765-6124 or Niesje at 905-772-3700. See ad in this issue.
Oct. 28	50th Anniversary Celebration Evening for Clarkson CRC at St. John's Hall, 2185 Stavebank Rd., **Mississauga,** Ont. at 7 p.m. See ad in this issue.
Oct. 28-29	50th Anniversary First CRC, **London**, Ont.; **Oct.28**: Celebration Banquet; **Oct.29**: Special Worship Service. See ad in this issue.
Oct. 28-29	First CRC of **Kingston,** Ont. 50th Anniversary Celebrations. See ad in Aug. 21 issue.
Oct. 29	50th Anniversary Service at 10 a.m., Clarkson CRC, **Mississauga,** Ont. See ad in this issue.
Nov. 3	Christian Festival Concert under the direction of Leendert Kooij, Roy Thomson Hall, **Toronto,** Ont. $25/$20/$15 Call 416-636-9779. See ad in July 24 issue of CC.
Nov. 4	5th Annual Arts & Crafts Jubilee. Quality crafts, door prizes, penny sale, lunch, refreshments etc.; Admission $ 1/adult. Jubilee Fellowship Church, 13 Wilholme Dr. at 1st. St./3rd Ave., **St.Catharines.**
Nov. 11	"Remember When?" Singles Social at Burlington Arts Centre, 1333 Lakeshore Rd., **Burlington,** Ont. 8 p.m. - 12 a.m., $15. Call Sandra 905-388-7387 or Sue 905-765-5543. See ad this issue.
Nov. 11-12	First CRC of **Lethbridge,** Alta. 50th Anniversary celebrations. Call Anne Bosma at 403-328-9985 for more info. See ad June 26 issue.
Nov. 17	First CRC of **Thunder Bay,** Ont. - 50th Anniversary celebration dinner and program. For dinner reservations or more information, call Audrey Grootenboer at 807-935-2778. See ad in this issue.
Nov. 17	Organ and piano concert by Jonathan Oldengarm and Ron Greidanus. "Men of Note" will sing too. Clinton CRC., **Clinton,** Ont. 7:30 p.m. Tickets $ 10., children under 12 – $ 5.

Hopes & Dreams
50th Anniversary 1950-2000

First Christian Reformed Church of Toronto Celebrates its 50th Anniversary Please join us !

Saturday, Oct. 7 (Thanksgiving Weekend)
2:00 p.m. Open House with Refreshments
5:30 p.m. Light Supper (Reservations required)
7:00 p.m. Program "A Light-Hearted Revue of Our Past"

Saturday supper reservations: Call or e-mail the Church
(We need your name, phone number and how many are in your group.)

Sunday, Oct. 8 - 10 a.m. Worship Service
Hopes and Dreams for the Future – Rev. C. Tuyl preaching

Many people have been associated with First CRC over the years. Please share this information with any who may be interested. Thank you.

First Christian Reformed Church of Toronto
67 Taunton Road, Toronto ON M4S 2P2
phone: 416-481-4912 e-mail:firstcrc.to@on.aibn.com

FIRST CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH
Thunder Bay, Ontario

50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

All former members and friends of the congregation are invited to a celebration on

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2000 D.V.

Join us for a dinner and a program at 6:30 p.m.
For dinner reservations or more information, please call Audrey Grootenboer at 807-935-2778.
50th Anniversary Books are also available.
"Remembering God's Covenant Faithfulness." (Deut. 7:9)

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Home of confidence

See you at Hamilton Place
Thursday October 20, 2000 - 7:30pm Sharp!
Mass Student Choir, 1000 voices singing Together from area Christian Schools
Come celebrate with us.
No Admission,
Free will offering for CCEF will be taken.

READERS ARE LEADERS
CANADIAN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION FOUNDATION INC.
CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF SERVICE IN THE YEAR 2000

For further information contact our Executive Director
Fred R. VanderVelde
CANADIAN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION FOUNDATION
2621 CAVENDISH DRIVE, BURLINGTON, ON
TEL: (905) 336-5619 • FAX: (905) 336-2376

Burlington, Ontario

Maranatha Homes

This award-winning Senior Citizen Homes is located close to Burlington Christian Reformed Church and Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church, with audio hook-up for the Sunday services in every apartment from both churches and a weekly evening video church service presentation.
Local bus service at the door. Monthly rent is geared to income.

Information from:
Rosanne van der Woerd, 3260 New Street
Burlington, ON L7N 3L4 905-681-0311

50th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
First CRC of London, Ontario
is celebrating "50 Years of God's Love Shining."

Sunday, October 22, 2000
Rededication of the newly renovated sanctuary.
Saturday, October 28, 2000
Celebration Banquet
Sunday, October 29, 2000
Special worship services
(Former pastors participating)

Former members are especially invited to attend.
For more information and banquet tickets ($20), e-mail: Church Administrator wilma@skynet.ca or call 519-432-7997.

News

Work Research Foundation appoints its first president

Alan Doerksen

MISSISSAUGA, Ont. — The Work Research Foundation (WRF), a Christian think-tank based in Mississauga, Ont., recently announced the appointment of its first full-time president, Michael Van Pelt, who has a strong background in business and municipal politics.

Van Pelt, who started his new position Sept. 5, describes it as "a combination of a strong organizational role and a strong projects role." Van Pelt appreciates WRF's "notion of viewing public policy from a foundational Christian worldview" and wants to "take some of that public policy thinking and bring it into the public marketplace in a more aggressive way."

'An excellent platform'

Van Pelt calls WRF "a fascinating concept," and "an excellent platform" for Christians to interface with the general marketplace. "My work history is very much part of that broader marketplace," he observes. "I've been active in the municipal world." That involved dealing with such issues as amalgamating communities on both a practical and philosophical level.

Van Pelt is a graduate of McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, where he concentrated on history and political science studies, reports WRF. He entered the world of business, politics, and public policy with the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB). The four years he spent with CFIB served as a basic training in relating public and government policy to business and the community.

'Bigger picture' challenge

Van Pelt ran for municipal office and served as a councillor in the Town of Mitchell from 1994 to 1997. During this time, he led the successful amalgamation of the three municipalities surrounding Mitchell. His council was faced with the challenge of building a community that supports a vibrant economy, stable families, committed volunteers, and quality educational institutions. This "bigger picture" challenge framed his day-to-day decisions in running the municipal government.

For two years, he managed his family's construction company and quickly became acquainted with the reality of accounts receivable, accounts payable, lines of credit, customer service, and managing employees in the fast-paced construction industry.

In 1997, Van Pelt was appointed as General Manager of the Sarnia-Lambton Chamber of Commerce, where he led a number of successful advocacy efforts, including a property tax project and a transportation initiative. Recently, he led a delegation of 28 senior business leaders and local officials to Queen's Park on a two-day intensive campaign designed to raise the profile of Sarnia-Lambton in the provincial legislature. According to Gus Mumby, president of the Chamber, "the board will miss [Van Pelt's] innovative leadership but also recognizes he is leaving behind a strong management team."

COURTESY WORK RESEARCH FOUNDATION

Michael Van Pelt

In 1998, Van Pelt launched the annual *Trade Corridors Conference*. This conference is a major catalyst in the integration of transportation infrastructure planning with trade policy and community development at the local, provincial, and federal levels of government.

Michael and his wife, Deani Van Pelt, have three children, Andrea (9), Meghan (7), and Kenton (3). The Van Pelts attend Wyoming Christian Reformed Church, and will soon be relocating to Ancaster, Ont.

Child or grandchild off to college? Moving out? Help them keep in touch.

Give yourself, a friend, a kid who is off to college or struggling to raise a family a gift that keeps them in touch with the life of the body of Christ around the globe.

The media spews out information so furiously we can't possibly absorb it all. We lose focus. Stop listening.

Yet, Christians are called to pay close attention... To discern the times. Sharpen your focus. Hone your worldview.

- **Subscribe to Christian Courier at a special introductory rate!**

To help us nurture a biblical worldview, especially among the younger generation, friends of Reformed Faith Witness have pitched in to make possible this special introductory rate of:

$25.00 (G.S.T. Included) for first-time subscribers.

COUPON COUPON

Please enter my subscription for one year immediately. I enclose a cheque for $25.00, payable to Christian Courier.

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City/Town Postal Code

Vietnam authorities destroy 'church'

HO CHI MINH CITY, Vietnam (Compass) — On July 1, city officials demolished a crude church structure in a slum area of Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon). The "church" had been erected only hours before by Christians who were led to believe that they had permission to build. The pastor and his congregation had been meeting together since 1991. When the bewildered Christians met for Sunday worship on July 2, they were further harassed by militia videotaping the proceedings.

A Vietnam watcher said that "freedom of religion" guaranteed in the constitution and trumpeted by Party leaders has many qualifiers in communist Vietnam. There are at least 3,500 house churches belonging to various affiliations throughout Vietnam — all considered illegal. Many of these house church groups have been seeking legal recognition for years without result.

Voortman

Color printing of this issue of *Christian Courier* is made possible by the generosity of Voortman Cookies Ltd. Thanks!

News Digest

Sect wants to outlaw Bible

BERLIN, Germany (EP) — Lawyers of a religious sect in Germany want to outlaw the Bible. Christian Sailer and Gert-Joachim Hetzel, two lawyers belonging to the Universal Life sect, have asked the Ministry of Family Affairs to classify the Bible as inappropriate literature for children.

The application was rejected by Minister Christine Bergmann. According to the IDEA news agency, Sailer and Hetzel claim that the Bible contains messages of racism and brutality that could harm the souls of naïve children and should therefore be listed as unsuitable reading material. Their criticisms are consistent with the teachings of the sect, which follows self-proclaimed prophet Gabriele Wittek.

Pigeons aren't a miracle

ASSIUT, Egypt (EP) — Residents of a city in southern Egypt have taken the hobby of bird-watching to a spiritual level. Since Aug. 17, inhabitants of Assiut have claimed that visions of the Virgin Mary have appeared in the sky above a local church, and that unusually large flocks of white doves have been sighted. The announcement has drawn thousands of pilgrims to the area, which has many Coptic Christians.

One pastor, Father Baki Sedka, is not impressed by the reports. "I stayed up all night and I didn't see anything except a few pigeons," Sedka told the Associated Press. "The appearance of a few pigeons doesn't justify a miracle."

Churches oppose Wahoo

CLEVELAND, Ohio (Religion Today) — Christian groups and the mayor of Cleveland are speaking out against Chief Wahoo, the cartoon logo of the Cleveland Indians baseball team, reports the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*. The "moral groundwork" for opposition to the logo had already been laid by the actions of black and mainline Protestant groups.

The United Methodist General Conference has called on team owners to remove the offensive logo and told its planners not to hold future conferences in a city where such sports mascots exist, reports the United Methodist News Service. Many American Indians find the "fire-engine red, hook-nosed, buck-toothed logo" offensive, states the *Plain Dealer*.